


FRONT: GUNNER PALACE • 7 / MUSIC: BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE • 36 / ARTS: A GRAND TIME IN THE RAPIDS • 57

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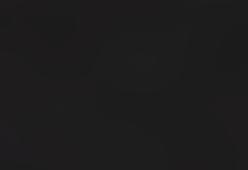
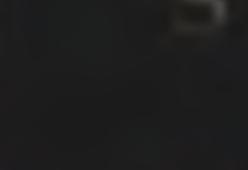
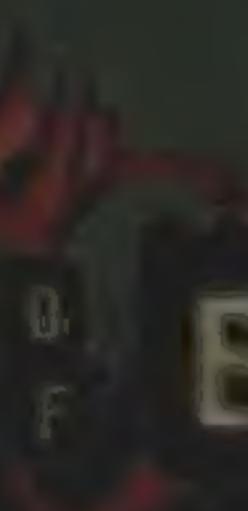
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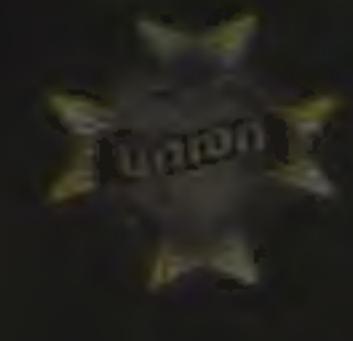
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CONTENTS

FRONT

- 4 Three Dollar Bill
- 6 News Roundup
- 6 VuePoint
- 7 Gunner Palace
- 8 Bob the Angry Flower
- 8 Life After Gretzky
- 9 Infinite Lives
- 10 Bestest of Edmonton

DISH

- 32 Russian Tea Room
- 34 Tropika Malaysian Cuisine

MUSIC

- 36 Brian Jonestown Massacre
- 38 Music Notes
- 40 Music Weekly
- 43 They Shoot Horses, Don't They?
- 45 No Hands
- 46 Zombie Night in Canada
- 48 Stabilo
- 50 Ronnie Artur
- 52 New Sounds
- 53 Quick Spins

FILM

- 54 Sabah
- 55 Film Weekly
- 56 Turtles Can Fly
- 56 6ixtynin9

ARTS

- 57 A Grand Time in the Rapids
- 57 Street Performers Festival
- 58 Atavism
- 59 Theatre Notes
- 59 Arts Weekly
- 60 Free Will Astrology

THE BACK

- 60 Events Weekly
- 61 Classifieds
- 62 Alt Sex Column

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ON THE COVER

Who's the bestest security guard in Edmonton? How about the bestest streetcorner dancer, or the bestest shit-disturbers? What's the bestest pet cemetery, or the bestest birthday party venue, or even the bestest place to see fat guys with their shirts off? There's only one place to find out all that and more: *Vue Weekly's* Third Annual Bestest of Edmonton edition. And we've thrown a few worstests in there too, just to spice things up • 10

FRONT

Michael Tucker shows his military intelligence in *Gunner Palace* documentary • 7



MUSIC

You're not a real rock writer until you've been abused by Brian Jonestown Massacre's Anton Newcombe • 36



ARTS

Etiquette tips from the cast of Stewart Lemoine's *A Grand Time in the Rapids* • 57

three
dollar
bill

BY RICHARD BURNETT

Prize specimen

I was one of just 4,000 people who visited gay icon Walt Whitman's stark home outside Philadelphia city limits across the Delaware River in Camden, New Jersey last year, and I found myself moved when I stepped inside Whitman's bedroom and saw the actual bed he died in back in 1892. Whitman the poet also presides over three connected stories, each exploring the search for beauty in a dehumanizing world, in American author Michael Cunningham's just-published novel *Specimen Days*, which is named after Whitman's autobiography *Specimen Days & Collect*.

Some critics have complained Cunningham rips off his previous novel, *The Hours*, in which another three interwoven tales feature Virginia Woolf. But I think not. "Whitman means a great deal to me," Cunningham explains over the phone. "He was America's whirling dervish. He came along at an especially difficult time. He wasn't naïve. He was a great liberating spirit."

I think the same is true of Cunningham. The first story of his I ever read was a May 1992 *Mother Jones* magazine piece I accidentally rediscovered digging through boxes last week before babbling with Cunningham. The feature was about the meteoric rise of Queer Nation across America and was titled "If you're queer and you're not angry in 1992, you're not paying attention. If you're straight it may be hard to figure out what all the shouting's about." It reminded me of my own days in the trenches. But is Cunningham still angry?

"Sure I am," he says, "but I'm angry about different things. Anger evolves over time. The departure point was Queer Nation. Today, gay people are livid about the fundamentalist platform of the Republican Party. I think George W. Bush is an evil man. He's doing terrible things to the world. Every day there's a new horror. I'm also horrified that 51 per cent of Americans—after four years of being lied to and seeing their children off to die—voted for more of this. That was sobering."

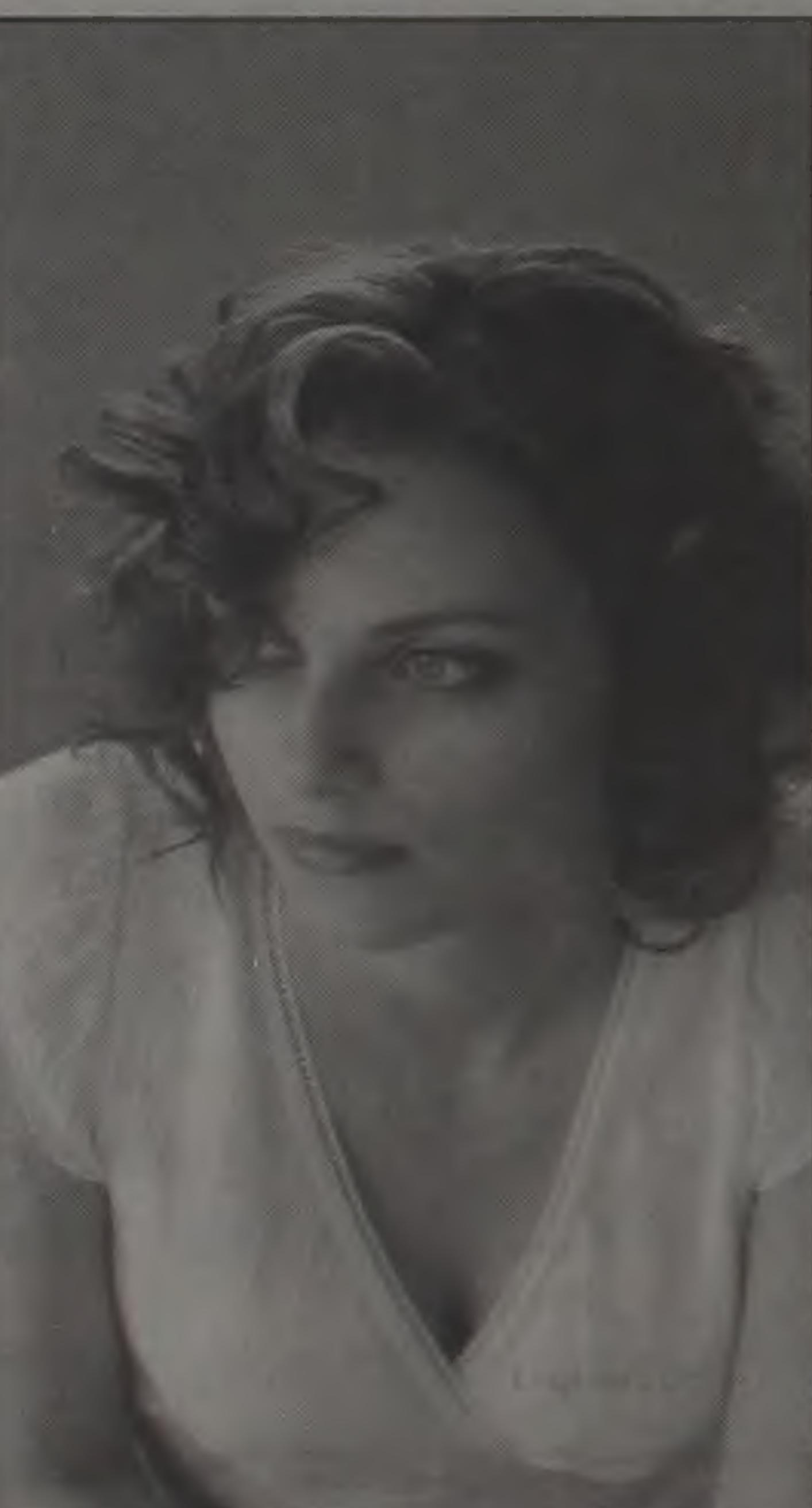
New York-based Cunningham was out of town during the September 11 attacks and believes America squandered an opportunity to tap into world sympathy and empathy in the wake of 9/11. "Instead of bonding with the world, we have chosen bombing," he says. "Such an opportunity will not present itself for another 50 to 100 years. This is lasting damage and it infuriates me."

Cunningham admits feeling much pressure following up *The Hours*, which won the Pulitzer and also saw Nicole Kidman nab an Oscar for Best Actress

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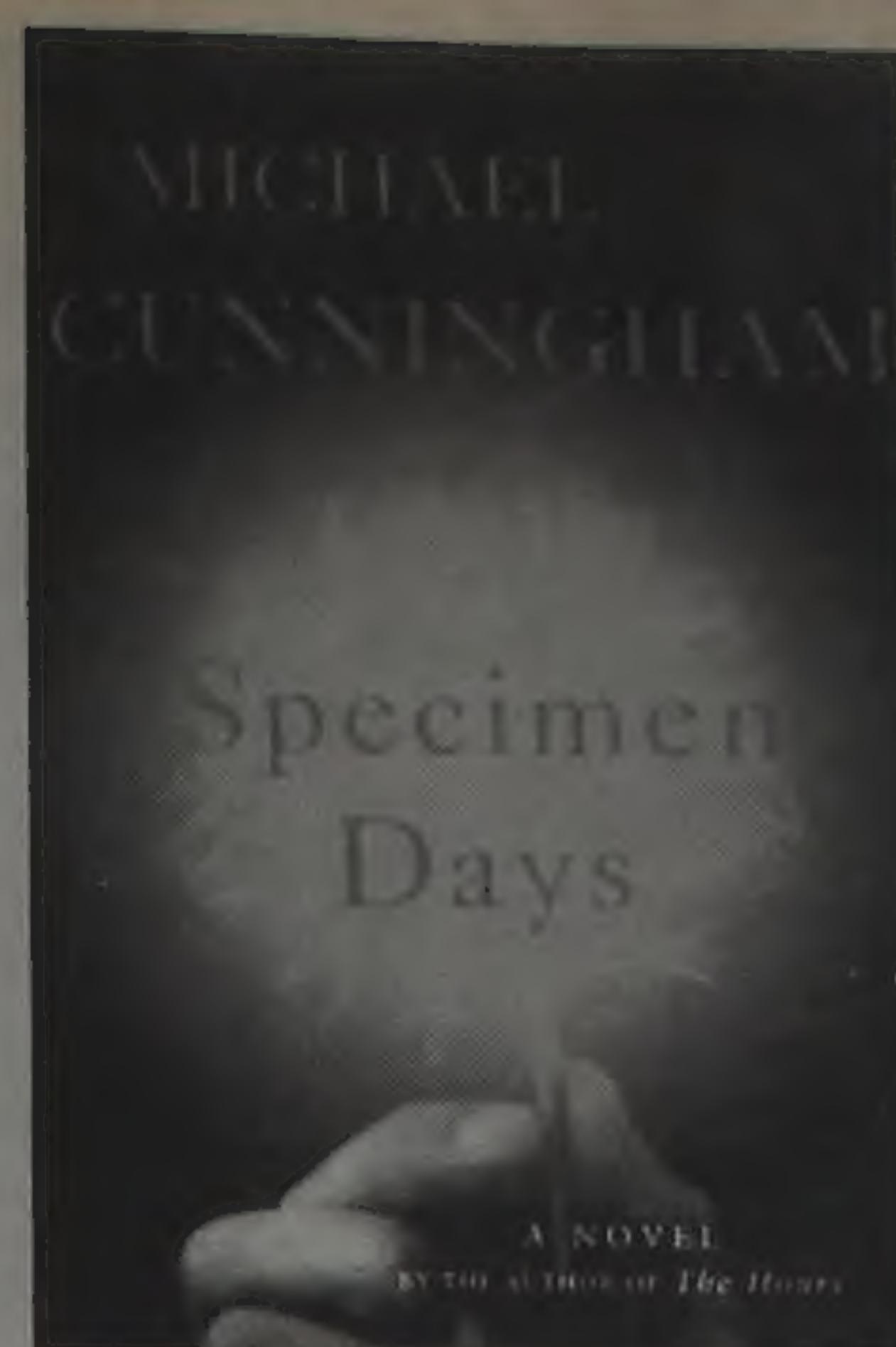
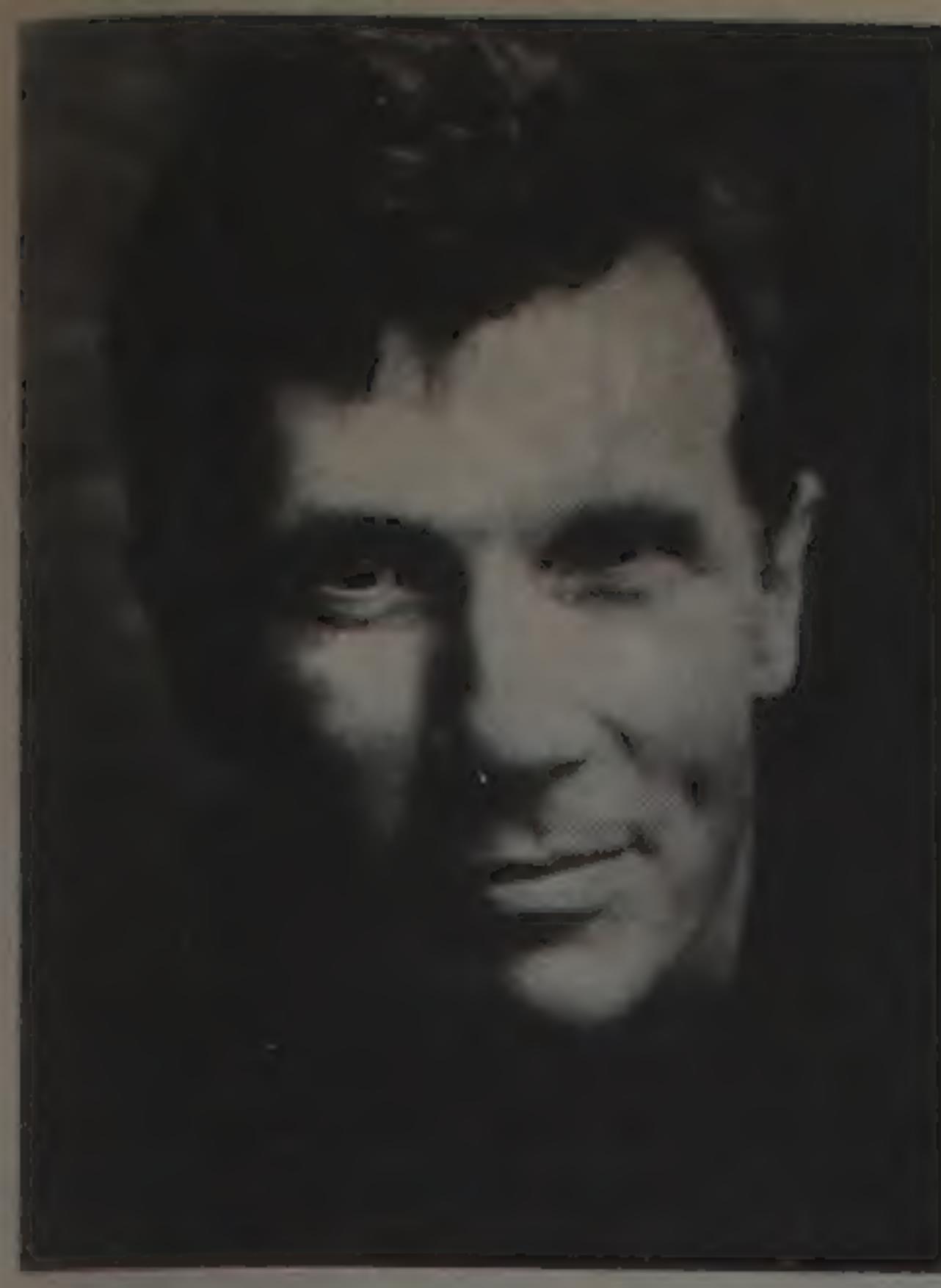
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for playing Woolf in the film adaptation. "I was really pleased with the movie," Cunningham says. "You can imagine the [poor] odds of getting a movie like that made. And winning the Pulitzer was entirely unexpected. I sat down stunned; I thought, 'My God, a book with ambiguous sexuality has been deemed indicative of the American experience.' It was momentous news—like finding out you're HIV-negative."

Winning a Pulitzer doesn't mean groupies are throwing themselves at Cunningham, though. "Not nearly often enough!" he laughs. "Please include the fact that I am looking for groupies. As for getting better tables in restaurants, well, there's no such thing as a famous American novelist."

Cunningham adapted his earlier novel, *A Home at the End of the World* for the big screen himself, and the film caused a furor last year over Colin Far-

rell's full-frontal nude scene. "It was blown so out of proportion," Cunningham says. "All the press wanted to do was talk about his dick. Colin just got sick of talking about it. So he called the director [Michael Mayer] and asked him to use a different shot and Michael agreed."

Cunningham laughs when I ask whether Farrell really is hung like a horse. "That was the rumour. [But] I've seen it. It was a beautiful dick. It's not terrifying."

Cunningham travels to his old apartment-turned-workspace daily. Right now he's scripting Lolly Winston's novel *Good Grief* for Julia Roberts ("I'm two-thirds the way through the first draft, which I hope to complete by the end of July"), and when he's not writing, he's reading. "I read newspapers and magazines every day," Cunningham says. "I have piles everywhere. I'm

indiscriminate in my taste of magazines. I'll read any piece of crap!"

Which brings us to the *National Enquirer*. "They ran a photo of me kissing Calista Flockhart," Cunningham recalls. "It was at the Golden Globes the year *The Hours* was nominated and I met Calista and Harrison Ford [at the next table]. The awards were extremely long and everybody got extremely drunk. So I went out for a cigarette with Calista. We were so drunk we just started making out. Then Harrison Ford steamed in and said, 'What's going on here?' I thought I could take Harrison Ford. But in the end he just felt guilty."

That's the one time Cunningham has been in the *Enquirer*. "Well," I crack, "You have now officially arrived!"

"You know," Cunningham laughs, "you have to kiss a girl to get in the *Enquirer*.... I mean, I've kissed a lot of handsome boys too." ☀

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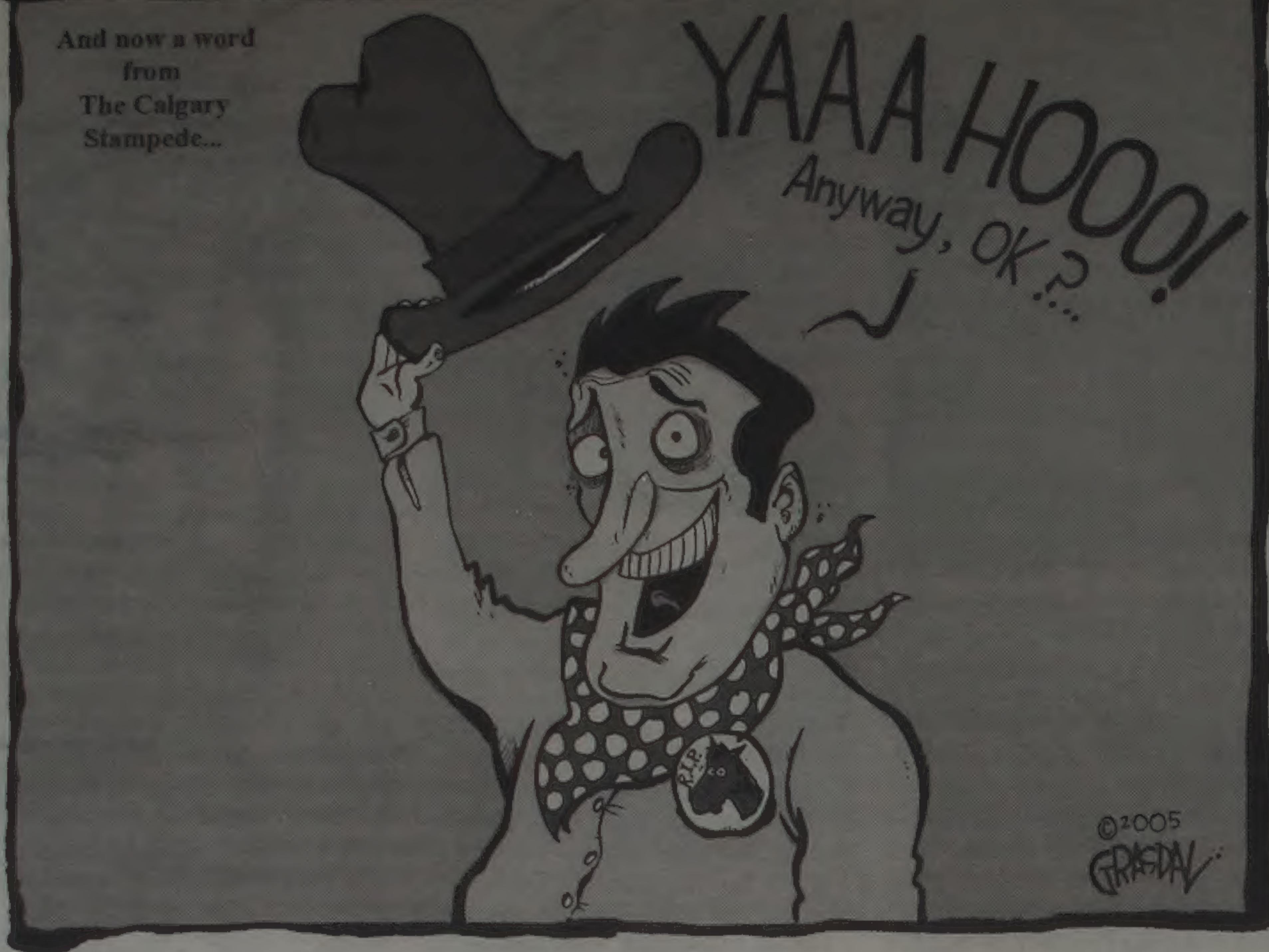
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news roundup

BY CHRIS BOUTET

AMERICANS: TOO DUMB!

Hey, let's face it: building cars? It's a pretty easy job, considering the entire process has long since been broken down into an assembly line system composed of easy-to-learn, mindlessly repeated tasks that even small babies could probably perform if all those stupid child-labour laws didn't exist in North America. Still, there are apparently some less educated populations out there who just have a harder time than others figuring the whole car-building thing—which is why Toyota Motor Manufacturers opted to build their new North American plant in Woodstock, Ontario rather than America's South, despite hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies offered by several Confederate-flag-flyin' states.

According to a report from the Canadian Press on Sunday, the polite version of the snub was that Ontario workers are just better trained than their American counterparts, making it more cost-efficient to train workers when the new plant opens in 2008. "The level of the workforce in general is so high that the training program you need for people, even for people who have not worked in a Toyota plant before, is minimal compared to what you have to go through in the United States," said Gerry Fedchun, president of the Automotive Parts Association in an interview with the CP. "The educational level and the skill level of the people down there is so

much lower than it is in Ontario."

Although several U.S. states were allegedly prepared to offer more than twice the construction and maintenance subsidies put forward by the Ontario government, Toyota remained unenthusiastic about the prospect, citing difficulties encountered by Nissan and Honda in getting new southern U.S. plants up to full capacity due to a grossly untrained—and often illiterate—workforce. In at least one instance, Nissan reported having to use diagrams and "pictorials" to teach illiterate workers how to use the high-tech equipment.

In response to the news, U.S. officials reportedly stared blankly at nothing in particular for a while, then kind of furrowed their brows and moved their mouths like they were going to say something, then just went back to staring.

CRISIS: AVERTED!

Despite concerns that the newly-instituted public smoking ban would result in widespread bankruptcy for Edmonton's bars, casinos and restaurants due to the legions of smokers who would obviously rather stay home and smoke their brains out than go out and have fun, it seems things actually turned out pretty okay.

According to a report from the CBC, our first weekend out from under the haze of cigarette smoke went off without a hitch, prompting a few bemused smiles and "hey, whaddaya know?" shrugs from business owners like Dadeo's Howard Silverman who were fearing the worst. "It's all good, man," Silverman, who opposes the ban, told the CBC. "No problems. To be honest with you, I think there are more people who are happy not to have to breathe it in."

It appears, however, that there are still a few kinks that need to be ironed out—for instance, according to the CBC, some East Indian and Middle Eastern establishments are wondering whether or not their hookahs—water pipes through which patrons smoke a mixture of tobacco, molasses and fruit—fall

under the ban. "My customers, they are actually phoning us now, every single day, asking us what's going to happen," restaurateur Ghada Ghazal told the CBC.

The story noted that these owners had yet to hear any direction from the city regarding the legality of hookahs; a quick phone call on *Vue*'s part to John Wilson of the Edmonton Planning Department's complaints and investigations section, however, found Wilson had not been approached by any business owners over the question of hookahs.

"If I had been contacted by these people, I would have simply told them that if your product contains tobacco, the bylaw applies," Wilson said. "It's a ban on lighted tobacco products. I really can't make it any clearer than that."

STUDENT LOANS: INESCAPABLE!

The Canadian Federation of Students says it's considering an appeal after the organization lost a court battle on Monday in which they sought to challenge the federal law that bars students from declaring bankruptcy for 10 years after studies cease.

"Students, along with those convicted of fraud, are about the only people who don't have the resort of bankruptcy," said CFS research director Michael Conlon in an interview with the Canadian Press. "From our standpoint, if an individual has fallen into difficult circumstances and has incurred the debt honestly, they should be entitled to the same rights as every other Canadian citizen."

As such, CFS launched the suit in 2000, arguing that the 10-year prohibition discriminates against students based on a false stereotype that students renege on debts. Justice Gordon Sedgwick of the Ontario Superior Court disagreed, ruling on Friday that student loan debtors do not constitute a specific group that should be protected against discrimination by Section 15 of the Charter. ☐



vuepoint

BY EMMA SASSE

Whistle stop

The online *Double-Tongued Word Wrester Dictionary of Words on the Fringe of the English Language* defines "dog whistle politics" as a "concealed, coded or unstated idea, usually divisive or politically dangerous, nevertheless understood by the intended voters."

Blowing the dog whistle during times of political controversy is a tactic that's been used in all kinds of places on all kinds of issues. When Australian Prime Minister John Howard announced during the last election that he didn't want to make the contest "about illegal immigration," he was really speaking to all the racists out there who wanted to blame their problems on people from someplace else. In Alberta, politicians are shameless in blowing the dog whistle—shrieking out their homophobia for all who are attuned to hearing it. Blow the dog whistle, and you'll get your message out to all the mean-spirited fearmongers out there without paying a political price among those who aren't necessarily paying attention.

"We have no weapons left in our arsenal," said a theatrically dejected Ralph Klein, after Parliament passed its marriage equality legislation. "We might get out of the marriage business entirely." Dog-whistle translation: the fight against equality is one we've waged with military, masculine vigour, and now, instead of letting everyone sit wherever they want on the bus, Alberta's going to shut down the transit system. The message, drilled home every day and targeted specifically to the minority of Albertans who want to be reassured that their fears about sexual diversity are really okay, is that gays and lesbians are different—and, by extension, inferior. The dog whistle also says: the people in power in this province will fight, they will claw at the Constitution, toss money at lawyers, bully the "different kids" on the playground into submission, all in order to establish heterosexuality as the dominant, and superior, form of family organization.

Meanwhile, some are asking if dog whistle politics has an effect on people's safety, in the wake of two shocking incidents of hate-motivated gay-bashing in Edmonton. Two American studies have shown that incidents of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer people increase dramatically when equality issues are in the media spotlight. Cast an identifiable group as "other" for long enough, talk about how you are going to "fight" their equal rights for long enough—and don't be surprised when idiots internalize those messages and act upon them. ☐



Dispatch from Operation Grabass

The shadow of Abu Ghraib looms over Michael Tucker's soldiers-in-Iraq doc *Gunner Palace*

BY BRIAN GIBSON

Twenty-five minutes into *Gunner Palace*, Michael Tucker and Petra Epperlein's documentary of the 2/3 Field Artillery unit of the U.S. Army in insurgency-mired Baghdad, a brief title flashes onto the screen: "Tuesday Morning 0200 Hours. Operation Grabass: Raid on Suspected Bomb Builders." The camera enters the house to survey the aftermath of the raid. One of the soldiers says, "He was going for this, but I punched him in the fuckin' face. He was going for the AK [gun]." Then Tucker says in his calm, reportorial voiceover, "Intelligence says that hardcore bomb builders are in this house. They're looking for a few brothers."

The camera goes back outside. "Keep your mouth shut," we hear a soldier say, and now we're looking at one of the brothers, a man in a blue shirt and pants, kneeling on the ground, hands cuffed behind his back. "I'm a journalist," he says. The soldier leans over him, looks down and says, "I don't care. We've got a journalist filming with us right now. Keep your mouth shut." The man looks directly at us and says, a little more quietly, "You see that in camera. I am journalist. You do that, you mistake us." Quiet, the soldiers are telling him, "shut up." The man mutters, "Just shut your mouth in

Iraq. I know that 'shut up.'" The soldiers take him away, and Tucker says in voiceover, "No evidence of bomb building was found in the house. All of the brothers were detained and transferred to Abu Ghraib prison."

Tucker shot *Gunner Palace* in Iraq in September 2003 and February 2004, but the Abu Ghraib torture scandal of a few months later (where a soldier's leaked information and an investigation by Seymour Hersh in *The New Yorker*, amongst other reports, detailed shocking pictures and eyewitness accounts of emotional, mental and physical torture of Iraqi prisoners, most of them innocent civilians) stains the film, spreading out from this scene in a sickening wash of tainted innocence and corrupting power. In fact, I learn as I talk with Tucker over the phone from New York that it's a moment he's still retracing.

"That's the whole focus of my life right now," he says. "I was just in Baghdad, I just met him, the guy who was arrested, actually, I won't give you his name. He was taken away twice, both immediately after and then before I went to Baghdad the second time, we tried to locate where he was and we heard that he was in Abu Ghraib. About two months ago, I got an e-mail from someone who is a young journalist and a friend of theirs who watched the film in New York and recognized the prisoner.

"I just met him in Baghdad," he continues. "He spent nine months in Abu Ghraib. It looked like there was some abuse; he was very traumatized. It's really chilling—he's 38 years old, just like I am, he's a cameraman, just like I am. Using a word like 'moving' wouldn't even do it justice. You're just sitting there, going, 'I cannot believe

that this happened.' I mean, from a distance you can believe that it happens, but when you see it up close and personal.... When his friends watched the film and saw him being arrested, they were openly weeping. The anger and the resentment and them trying to hold it all together—you know, these are very decent, completely liberal, secular people who've been mistakenly branded as terrorists. It's appalling. To me, that's going to be the biggest footnote of the film, following through with that."

IN JUST 85 MINUTES, *Gunner Palace* offers enough footnotes to expand into a series of books as it documents the 2/3 gunners' time in Baghdad,

PREVIEW DOCUMENTARY

where they act as social workers, training officers and cops. Stationed in Uday Hussein's once-lavish palace in Adhamiya, a tense area of the city, 400 soldiers swim in the pool, have after-raid parties, practise golf on makeshift putting greens, rap improvised lyrics about being soldiers in Iraq and try to make sense of what the hell they're doing there.

Gunner Palace is intent on showing the day-to-day ins and outs of a moral and military quagmire, and moments like the scene where the brothers are taken off to Abu Ghraib are the real moments of invasion and violation, just one of countless instances where suffering is muted, consequences are delayed and we have to look beyond the surface of the surreal routine of war for the horribly real tragedies slowly unfolding.

"People from the outside are

looking for the violence," Tucker says, "but they're looking for a totally different violence than the violence that exists. And the violence is going into someone's house, the violence is pulling them out in the middle of the night, the violence is his mother there, shaking, as the helicopters are going over the house. We're so jaded to kind of a movie violence [that] when we see something real, something that really touches us, like the people living in the middle of a war, it's an interesting perspective on it. It's not showing people what they expect to see, so they don't really understand it."

There is, Tucker points out, "stuff that Iraqis would notice—they see subtle little things about the interaction in a home, the interaction with women... all these things they find atrocious. Or that last scene, where they're pulling the people out of the chairs and one group of soldiers is screaming, 'Get the fuck up!' and the other group is screaming, 'Get the fuck down!' To me that's a very real kind of violence, and you look over and there's a child sitting there with his uncle or something and you think, 'Oh my God! What's going to happen with him?'"

THE FIRST NIGHT that Tucker was with the unit, they got mortared. "Then," he says, "on the street, basic random gunfire, rooftop sniper kind of stuff, then of course IEDs [improvised explosive devices] were just popping up then, but by the time I went back the second time, two of them had been killed, and probably at that point about 40, 45 of them had been wounded." The sudden rips in the thin fabric of post-war Iraq are

always sobering. "I was just in Baghdad," Tucker says. "It was perfectly normal and quiet and everything was great and wonderful and I came home and four days later, the place where I was just the Friday before was hit by three car bombs."

Tucker, who shot *Gunner Palace* on DV (Epperlein, his wife, is the film's co-editor, co-producer and co-director), vividly contrasts the harsh realities of "minor combat" on the ground with Rumsfeld's prosaic, cheery pronouncements on Iraq as reported on air. Soldiers joke around, even parroting Joker's lines in *Full Metal Jacket* as they simultaneously mask and express what they're doing in Iraq, but they still can't come to terms with their situation. There's no way to make sense of the mess that these soldiers, most of them from working-class backgrounds, are stuck in the middle of, a mad world of cultural confusions and bitterness, sudden loss and lurking threats. And Tucker's film offers just a glimpse of one corner of all the chaos.

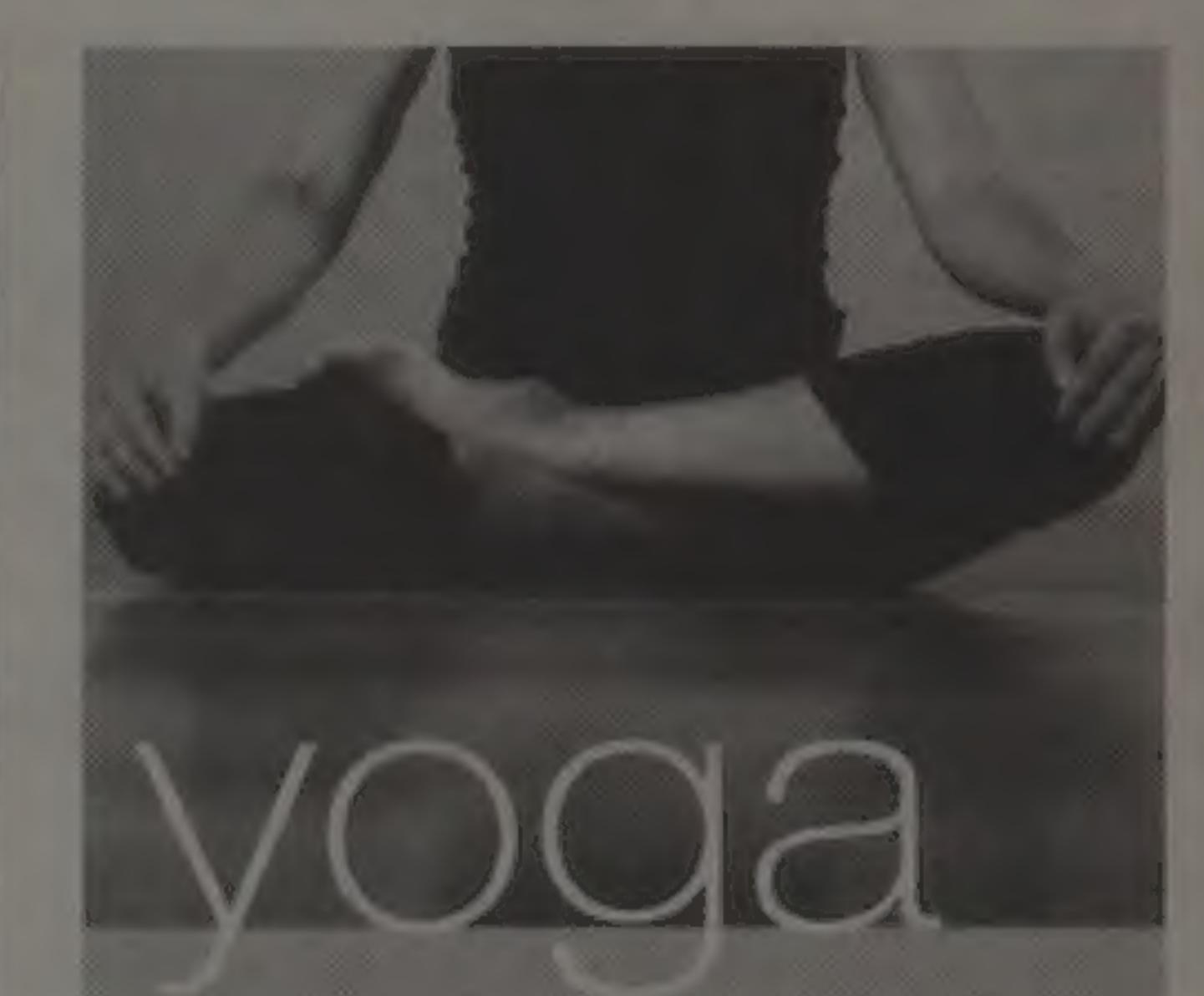
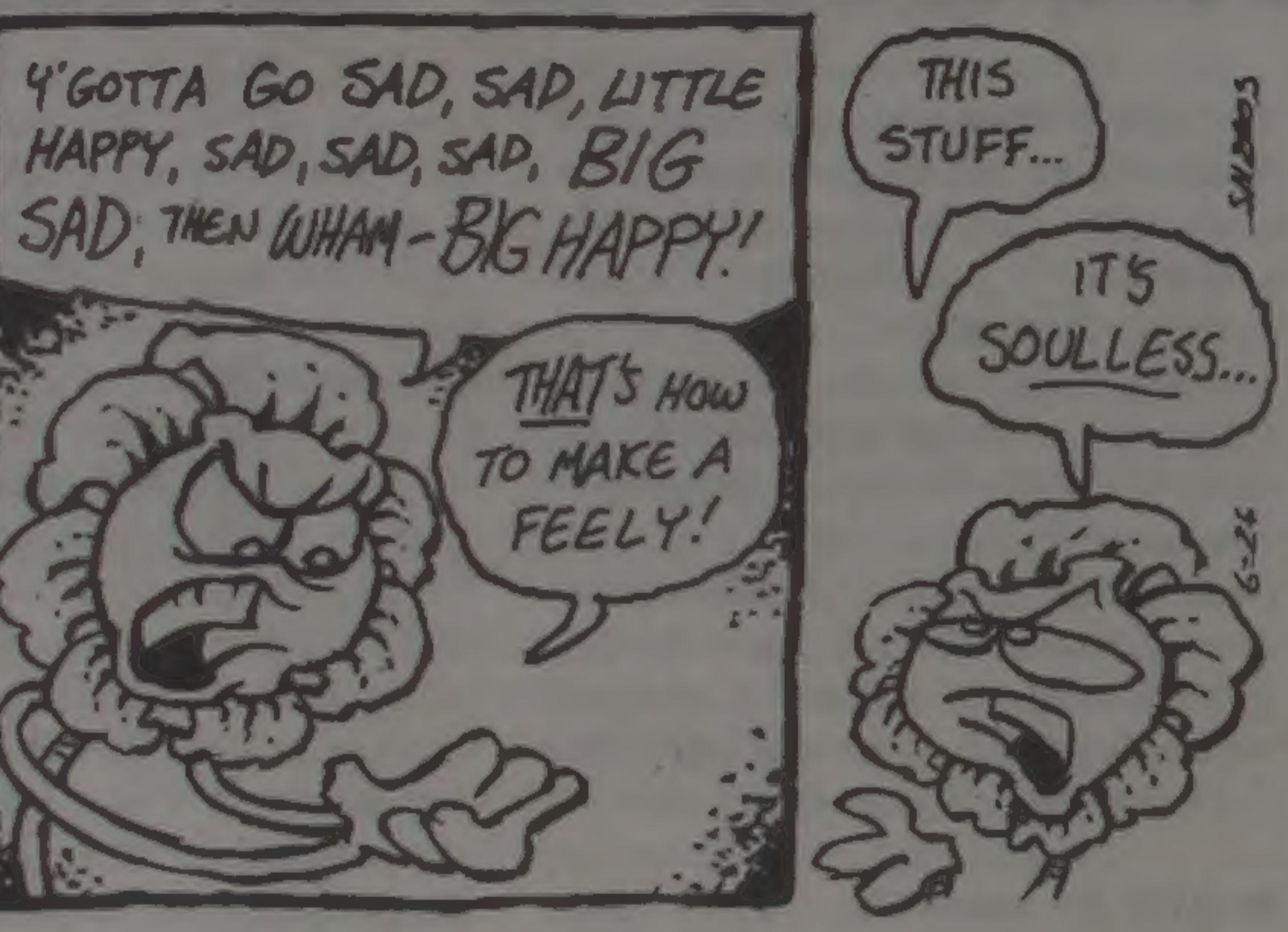
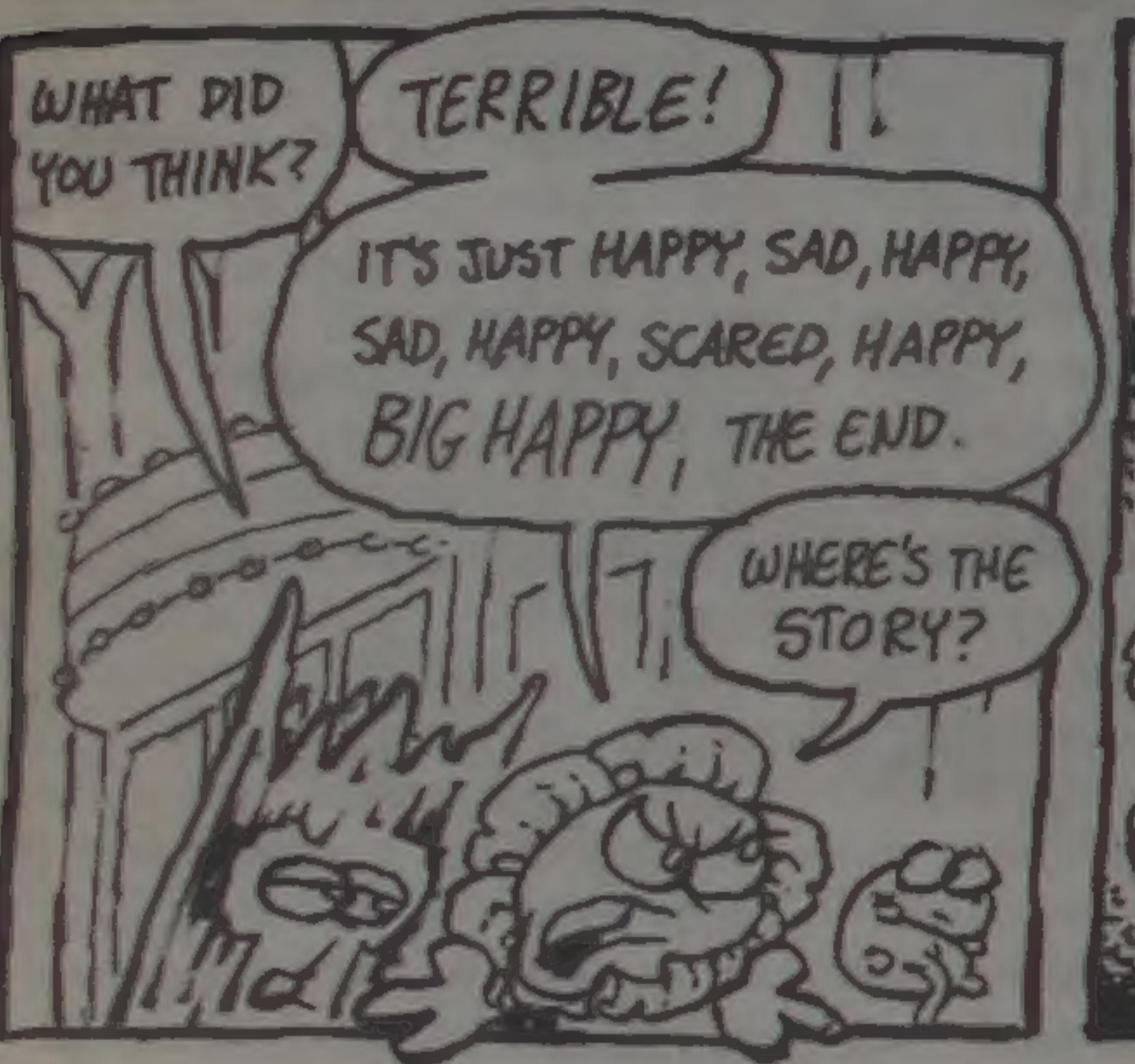
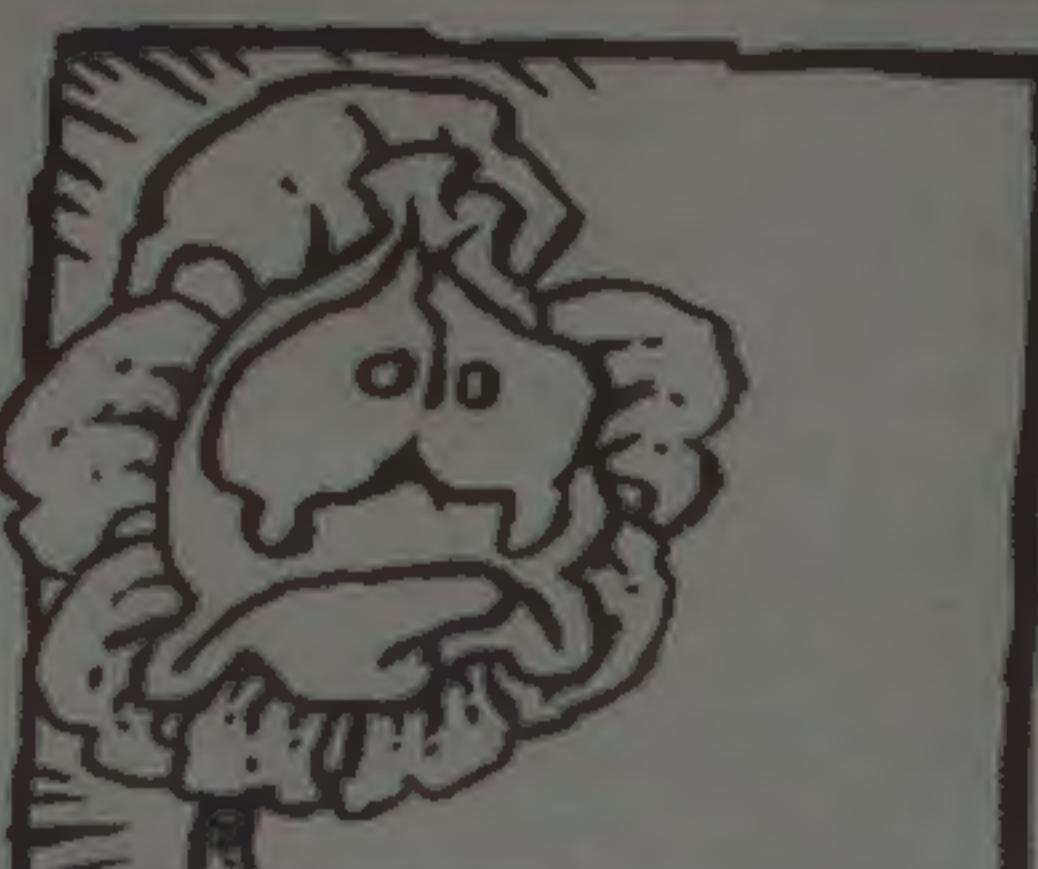
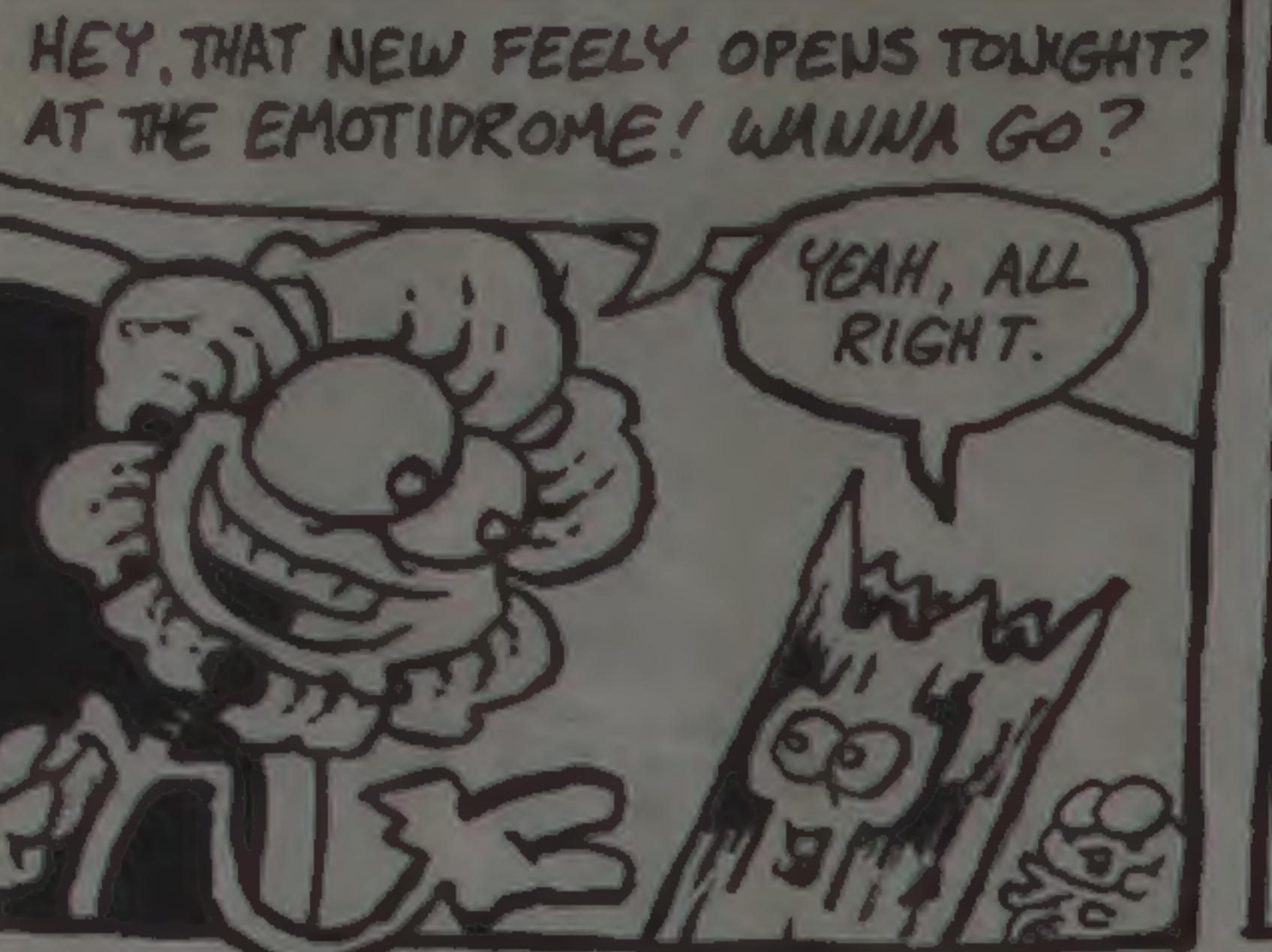
The soldiers who arrested that cameraman, for instance, aren't really to blame—they were carrying out orders based on faulty intelligence that came from someone else. Even some of the Iraqi co-operators in the film are later accused of colluding with insurgents. In the mess that Iraq has become, there don't seem to be any answers. "The war has mutated to the point where it's just not simple anymore," Tucker says. "No amount of politics is going to solve it."

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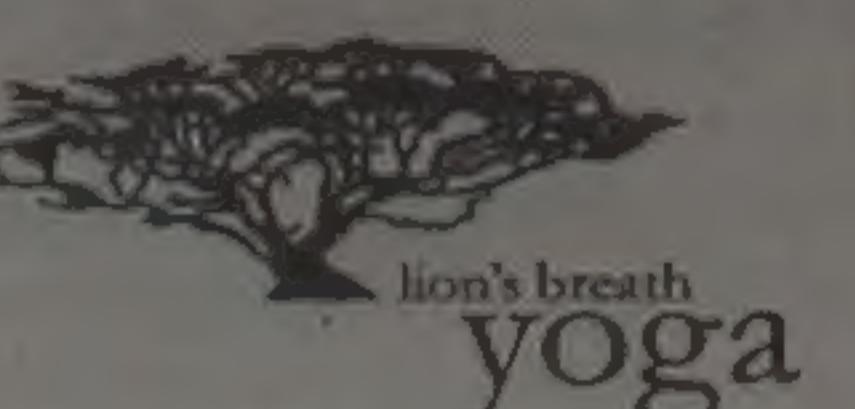
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behind? That's like, a day without sunlight or, like, a Christmas without presents—moreso if the presents are also knives. I mean, when a population as pro-stabbing as ours goes from eight stabbings last July 1 to zero this year... well, something must be horribly wrong. Something so big that all the knifey-knifey, that's-for-talking-to-my-ex-girlfriend-at-the-shooter-bar in the world wouldn't set things right.

It's possible that, in Edmonton, Canada Day has simply peaked, and now, four years removed from our last riot, we've finally come to terms with the fact that it's probably not going to happen again. And while some would argue that this is, in fact, a good thing, I disagree; after all, without the grim spectre of potential mayhem and the challenge of containing it hanging over our collective head and consuming our thoughts every year, Edmontonians might be inclined to start looking around and realizing that Champtown's Canada Day celebration, well, kind of sucks the proverbial dink. You know, in that one proverb? With the dinks? Man, didn't you people go to Sunday school?

Nonetheless, walking down Whyte Ave last Friday, I sensed a subtle hint of disinterest in the air, something intangible that lay beneath the slick veneer of fireworks and police officers that is Edmonton's version of partying. There was a distinct halfheartedness to the WHOOS that rose above the clamour of idling lowriders and borrowed-for-the-evening Nissan Sentras—they were WHOOS of obligation, born out of a sense of duty to enjoy oneself on the one day that life should most be like a beer commercial. Hell, even the dozens of cops who lined the streets of Party Central seemed to lack the motivation of years past, spending more time happily posing for pictures with drunk girls from out of town than trying to look menacing and so effectively creating the expectation of violence that Edmontonians have always been happy to live up to...

...until this year, that is, which featured not nine, not six, not even two—but precisely zero bar-related stabbings. Not one! Seriously—a Canada Day in Edmonton without some bar patron getting the old shiv-in-the-kidney-from-

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BY DARREN ZENKO

Tet offensive

The sun beats down on Browntown, bone-drying the playfields and flash-roasting the streetlevel strollers flaunting their wifebeaters, bumhuggers and brand-new babies. At least, I'm guessing they're babies; the little sunshading, rolling cocoon-pods that mainstreamers trundle their tykes around in these days are so safely screened off from the solar cancer curse it's hard to tell—a third of the time, it's a dog in there. Hey, babe, however you want to raise your pup; it's damn hot, and if Scruffers'd rather lounge around licking his ass in a nylon tricycle than run after sticks and rescue kids from wells, that's between you and him.

Me, I'm beating the heat by getting loaded on the Black Dog patio. I hope this ratty makeshift tarpaulin awning—I'm guessing it's to protect patrons from errant debris from the treefort construction going on in back—becomes some kind of permanent fixture. The shade's blessed and welcomed by us pasty nerds when the weather gets so nice the sheer guilt of daytime gaming drives us out of doors.

Can't escape digital entertainment that easily, though. You straights don't know what it's like for a game freak to walk down the street after 20-odd hours of *GTA*. It's not so much the homicidal feelings Congressmen and the moral mommies like to rant about—though a little AK action, just for the dumbfuck SUVers who figure their epic Quest for Parking gives them the right (the duty! for the children!) to wrong-way it down one-way streets, would be nice. No, it's more the itch to jack cars. The brain sends inevitable reflex impulses coursing through a player's body when we spot the real-world models for our favourite *GTA* rides. For me, it's CRXes; I don't know how they handle in real life (no license), but the digitally analogous "Bista Compact" has the kind of git-up that touches me in my special place. I've got a sweet little unit garaged out at Verdant Meadows that's riced up like you wouldn't fucking believe. Pop the hydraulics and head cross-country and that baby'll make San Fiero in...

Shit! No! I came up here to get out of game space, and drunk; when my buddy came over to drag my widening ass out into the sunshine it took me a while to actually remember how to speak without dialogue options. But wouldn't you know it, the inevitable happens—15 minutes into our cups the conversation somehow turns to *Tetris*.

I swear to God, it wasn't me who started it! I was safely, non-nerdily shooting the shit about rock music, belt buckles, cigarettes and flood insurance, when all of a sudden my pal and this stone fox with six-inch-heel KISS boots and no panties on under her denim dress were locked in a savage pissing match over who kicks the most ass on the legendary Russian life-wrecker. It was unbelievable,

back-and-forth bragging like it was some kind of freestyle rap battle. Boasts about levels, speeds, play styles and the monomaniacal frequency with which they rocked the blocks. When my friend made a yawning comment about how he'd made the Game Boy *Tetris* his bitch and the girl casually gave him the *cheat code* to make the game go to Level 15, I was so insta-crushed I drunkenly proposed marriage.

That's one of the (many) great things about *Tetris*—girls like it. Most videogame bull sessions are embarrassing sausage parties, but when *Tetris* comes up it's like a sexy co-ed slumber party. And *Tetris* does come up, often, and it's hilarious because something like 20 per cent of first-world young(ish) adults are absolutely convinced they—or some sibling or cousin—are the ruling monarch of *Tetris*; I've seen guys have to leave the room and cool off because some other Blockhead was frustrating them beyond patience by refusing to accept their superiority.

The funny thing is, for most people, *Tetris*-bragging doesn't make them look all that super-cool; *Tetris* stories are very often stories of obsession, compulsion, misanthropy and social seclusion: "All I did from Grade 7 until I went to university was sit in my basement playing guitar and *Tetris*"; "When my dad tried to make me stop playing I got so mad I smashed the TV and he kicked me out of the house"; "I kept a Game Boy on my toilet tank and for 10 years I played *Tetris* every time I took a shit."

I wonder if *Tetris* creator Alexei Pazhitnov knew what he was unleashing back in that mad June of 1985, when he took a break from coding the revolutionary software of the workers' glorious struggle on monstrous grey diesel-powered SovTek computer/tractors to cobble together a fun little opiate for the masses. The winds of change were blowing hard that season; new-broom Gorbachev was sweeping the Kremlin with his exciting new reforms while bootleg *samizdat* cassettes of "Careless Whisper" were sweeping the grey-market alleys of Moscow and teaching a generation of Russian youth about love, Western-style. Did he nervously chainsmoke Belomorkanals in his state-standard cubby while his creation spread like a virus around the USSR, finally metastasizing out into the West via opportunistic Hungarian hackers? Was he surprised when American, British and Japanese executives started showing up at the offices of his Communist Masters waving contracts and cheques, all claiming to already own what they were supposedly trying to buy in an international licensing dispute whose incredibly fucked-up legal and financial repercussions shaped—and are still shaping—an entire industry?

Could he have possibly guessed that his game would stand as Communism's greatest contribution to the art of interactive entertainment, and that 20 years later the decadent, drunken spawn of Capital's poisoned womb would still be scrapping over it? That the phrase "It feels so fucking good when you slide that long piece into the slot" would be giving Canadian boys summertime boners into the 21st century?

No way; *Tetris* is so awesome, even its creator had no clue as to its potential. If he had, he would have been smart enough to get more than a knockoff 286 clone and a nicer apartment out of the deal. ☺

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The Bestest of everything

We celebrate our city's quirkiest corners in our 3rd annual Bestest of Edmonton feature

BY VUE STAFF
ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES GRASDAL

This is *Vue Weekly*'s third annual Bestest of Edmonton feature, and we're proud to say that our platoon of writers has once again prepared several pages' worth of prose showcasing our city at its finest. Is there another feature like it anywhere else in Canada? We have our doubts. Sure, sure, a lot of other alt-weeklies run so-called "best of the city" features, but we here at *Vue* feel that, as an expression of civic pride, those long lists of noteworthy local businesses tend to be somewhat lacking in poetry and imagination. Surely, we thought, the true spirit of a city is to be found somewhere besides the Yellow Pages.

That's where the Bestest of Edmonton comes in—dozens of quirky mini-essays praising (and occasionally bemoaning) the unsung, intangible, ineffable qualities that make this city special, from the Bestest Security Guard and the Bestest Pet Cemetery to the Bestest Place to See Fat Guys With Their Shirts Off and the Worstest Awkward Smell. (Surprisingly, those entries refer to two different places.) Enjoy reading it, Edmonton—you guys are the bestest.

Contributors: Colleen Addison (CA); Jocelyn Ahlf (JA); David Berry (DB); Leah Collins (LC); Brian Gibson (BG); Chad Huculak (CH); Iain Ilich (II); Paul Matwychuk (PM); Ross Moroz (RM); Eden Munro (EM); Carolyn Nikodym (CN); Steven Sandor (SS); Christopher Thrall (CT); Darren Zenko (DZ)

Bestest Welcome to the City

Returning to Edmonton along Calgary Trail, not far from the airport, just out-

side the city limits, facing south, there's a mannequin moving slowly on a treadmill. He'll have neon green shorts on in summer, a Halloween costume in October, maybe hunter's gear or a parka in other months. Sure, he's advertising some place there that sells treadmills, but I like to think, as the man runs eternally, that he represents your average Calgarian stuck in the rat race, and there's no better symbol to leave behind on your way into our slightly offbeat, just a little more laid-back, definitely not run-of-the-mill city. Besides, Edmontonians could always start a campaign to free the poor Dilbert-like dummy from his endless slog.... (BG)

Bestest Highway to Hit at the Crack of Dawn

We're lucky enough to live in a city that's far enough from the Rocky Mountains to make it special when you're there, and close enough to actually make it a (long) day trip. Of course, there are two ways to get there, so which one is the best way to go? Hands down, it's the Yellowhead westbound. Not only does it have a cooler name than that other major thoroughfare, but you also get to start out with the sun rising behind you and lighting up the road ahead, rather than blinding you from the side. Sure, both roads will get you to the mountains, but taking the Yellowhead means that you don't have to traverse the perils of our southern neighbour to get there and the end of the road is a little more peaceful when you hit Jasper as opposed to the tourist mecca that is Banff. Plus, when

you leave for home late in the day, you've got the sun behind you again and you don't have to risk accidentally burning your eyes on a Calgary Flames jersey. (EM)

Worstest Stretch of Road That Will Never, Ever Be Repaired

The worst part about urban sprawl isn't the bland homogeneity of the neighbourhoods or the total lack of services. It's the roads. Tiny rural back roads are suddenly transformed into arterial thoroughfares for monster SUVs without putting a dime into them. 167 Avenue has a single signal light and a near-constant flow of traffic on a two-

SUPERLATIVES!

lane blacktop full of potholes and impatience. Perhaps when Edmonton and St. Albert merge into the Municipality of Happytown, the route will get the attention it needs. Until then, it's on the outskirts of both and won't be touched by either. (CT)

Worstest Merge

If you head northbound on Wayne Gretzky Drive and attempt the on-ramp to the Yellowhead eastbound, you are one brave soul indeed. After a sharp turn, the on ramp moves towards highway traffic at a particularly twisty spot on the Yellowhead. The ramp is too bendy and short, and there's no way to get up to highway speed by the time it merges, so someone will need to slam on the brakes to allow you in. A nightmare in engineering. (SS)



Worstest Driver

The jerk who came charging the wrong way down 83 Avenue at a ridiculous speed. If I'd been a couple of seconds further along 105 Street, I doubt I'd be writing this now. And then this dumbass actually yelled at me before stomping on the gas and continuing his race towards the oncoming traffic. Is it really too much to ask for drivers to at least pay attention to traffic direction, to say nothing of pedestrians? A little common sense could go a long way towards reducing accidents out there. (EM)

Worstest Suicide Run Derived From the 1982 Disney Movie *Tron*

Head south on 97 Street into downtown and you'll encounter not just Chinatown but a dreaded merge into one lane to avoid the cars parked along the sidewalk. It's a given that someone will try and speed up to cut in front of you to avoid stopping, but if you want to relive the adrenaline rush of that lightcycle scene in *Tron* where the two bikes race towards a hole in the wall only big enough for one, hit the accelerator and hold on. (CH)

Bestest Streetlight

I don't pretend to know anything about the intricacies of the Edmonton power system. What I do know is that there are certain places where entire rows of streetlights seem to function randomly. Sometimes they're on, sometimes there's just darkness. But down on Ellerslie Road, just before 156 Street, there is a single streetlight that I have never seen unlit. It shines down on a chainlink fence that blocks the

entrance to a small, desolate road. I'm not sure exactly why that spot needs to be lit so consistently, but every time I go by, I half-expect to see a shady character in an overcoat holding up the lamppost, a cigarette hanging from his lip while he tosses a quarter into the air. (EM)

Bestest Place to Get Your Bike in Shape

It's fucked up how a \$70 fix-it job at the hands of strangers at a commercial bike shop turns into a \$5 job you've just learned how to do yourself at Edmonton Bicycle Commuters (10047-80 Ave). Unless you're some sort of super-hardcore racer who needs special titanium parts from Korea, going to a commercial shop rather than EBC is like lighting your money on fire. (DZ)

Worstest Stairs

Maybe it's just me, but the escalator usually shuts down at the University LRT station when I'm there. That means a long upward climb from the deepest underground station in the city on a concrete staircase that's more "emergency exit" than "uptown chic." And that is one mean hike upwards, unless you want to wait for the elevator, which arrives about as regularly as Old Faithful spouts. It's not that I'm against physical fitness and long climbs, but come on already! (SS)

Bestest Store to Wander About Aimlessly In

Chintz and Company. It's astounding! Even if you're not into home furnishings, it's just so darned pretty! A wall of quality fake flowers! Sumptuous fabrics

that cost more than your TV! Knick-knacks hidden like buried treasure! Shiny flatware! Giant mirrors! It's heaven!!!! (Warning: wandering through Chintz and Company will make you shun furniture from other perfectly fine stores and set your decorating standards way too high for you to possibly afford.) (JA)

Bestest Place to Buy Things That Look Like They're From Chintz and Company

The Bay. Home Outfitters. Winners. (JA)

Bestest Marketing Ploy

In the midst of our usual evening unsocials—you must desperately want to shower us, your fantastic university, with all your unwanted coinage! No donation too large, even if you haven't actually gotten a job out of your six years!—there came a teensy little ring from Alberta Ballet. It was a real, live and slightly nervous-sounding dancer, phoning to invite me, personally, to next year's season. Admittedly this is clearly an advertising strategy, but it's a nice one. Friendliness: a new and remarkable brand of PR. (CA)

Worstest Marketing Ploy

Don't get me wrong—I support Amnesty International in all they do. I willingly give them time and would happily donate all the pennies out of my pocket and even a fiver or two. But a monthly donation taken from my credit card? Equally idiotic was the location where the (okay, rather nice) money-grabbers accosted me: right outside the Stanley Milner, not exactly the richest corner in town, no matter how busy the three-dollar-a-coffee Library Second Cup is. (CA)

Worstest Cartoon

Few things go down better on a hot summer day than a delicious Booster Juice smoothie, and few things do more to sour the experience of buying one than reading that obnoxious cartoon posted prominently at every Booster Juice outlet. You know the one:

a hiker stands on a low hill, walking stick in hand, and as he gazes out on an endless landscape of nothing but tree stumps, he remarks to his companion, "I think it's heartwarming that, in a sudden burst of environmental consciousness, even the fast food industry has switched from plastic to paper." Aaargh! It's the worst aspects of the environmentalist movement, all wrapped up in one single-panel cartoon: the complete lack of humour, the reliance on apocalyptic overexaggeration, the tone of smug, smarmy condescension masquerading as concern over the state of the forests, and above all, the serene conviction that everyone else in the world is either greedier or stupider than they are, and most likely both. (PM)

Bestest Place for a Street Fight

If I were gonna be in a street fight—NOT THAT I EVER WOULD UNLESS IT INVOLVED WEST SIDE STORY-TYPE SINGING AND DANCING—I would want to do it under the giant baseball bat on the "Avenue of Champions." Why? It's a giant baseball bat and I do think a bat would be my weapon of choice. Besides, it's not like you could play baseball there, and the traffic circle surrounding it would pretty much make the fight a cage match. (JA)

Bestest Place for a *West Side Story* All-Singing-All-Dancing Street Fight

Little Italy. And then we'd get a gelato. Mmmmm. (JA)

Worstest Place to Catch Up on Celebrity Gossip

Hands down it's the Kinsmen gym, where the upstairs equipment is always occupied by fitpeople (a new and terrifying breed) who also manage to snatch all the good 'n' crappy Stars and Peoples. Okay, okay, world war and a ton of homeless kids this isn't, but it's kind of fun to Fashion Police it through the celebrity star-bars while pounding the elliptical. *House and Garden* just doesn't cut it. (CA)

Bestest Cheap Weight-Training Program

Want to buff up but can't afford the gym? Just stroll to the Empire Building downtown and open and close the main doors a few times. I have seen these doors befuddle children and seniors; you really need to put your muscle into getting these hunks of heavy steel moving back and forth. (SS)

Bestest Bargain Breakfast

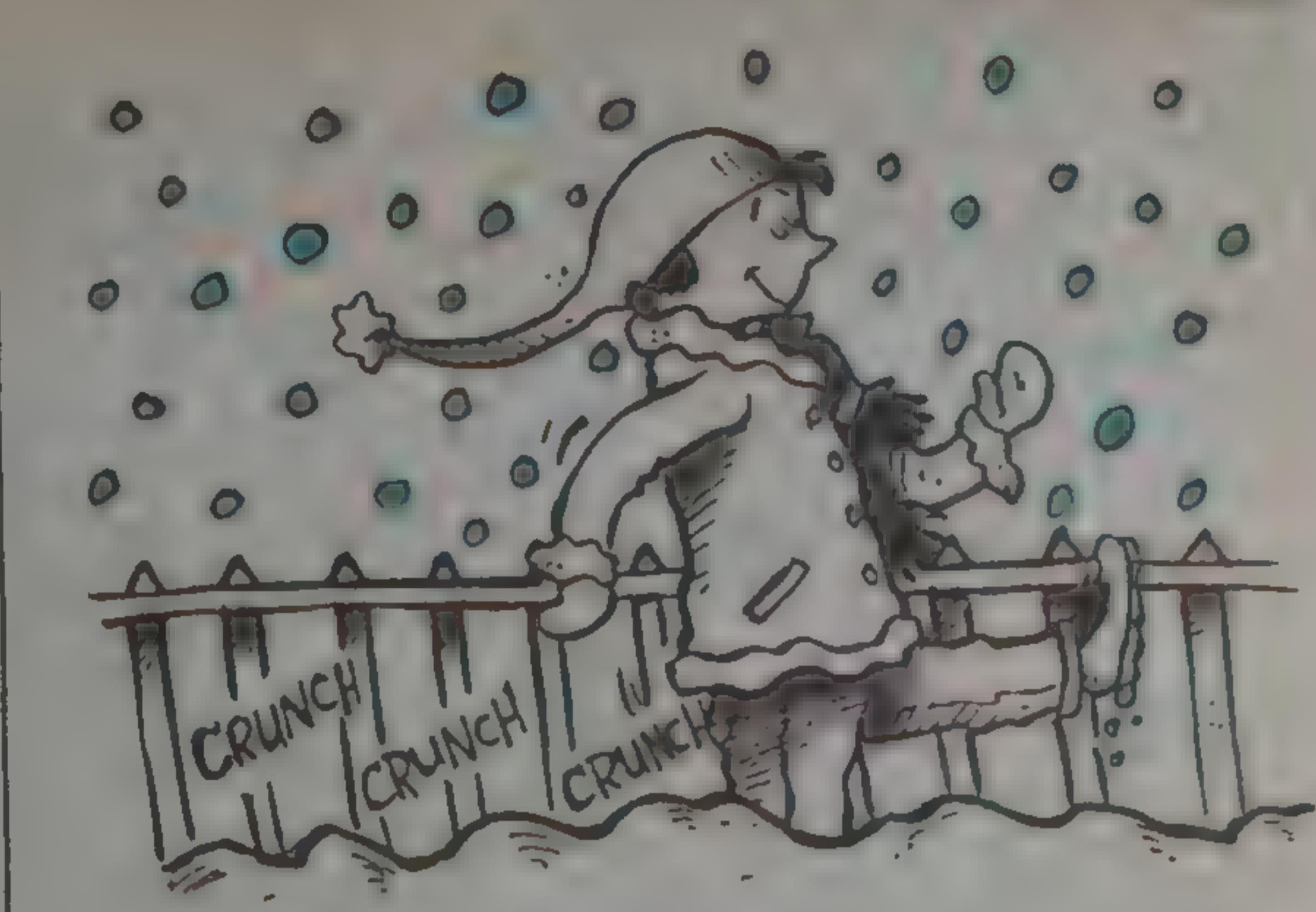
Inexpensive 'n' plentiful, the breakfast at B's Diner at 10015-82 Ave—whether diner-traditional eggs/potato/meat or something scrambled and vegetarian—is the bestest thing you could ever hope to enjoy inside a tiny cinderblock room. Some among us still pine for Larry's, which occupied the same space and serves the same purpose, but that's like sitting in Constantinople, mooning over the Glory That Was Rome; buck up and enjoy the pleasures that present themselves! (DZ)

Bestest Fast Food on Whyte

Burgers, donairs, dogs, falafel, pizza... they've had their day. The new quick and portable gutbuster on Whyte comes courtesy of the Oodle Noodle Box at 108th and Whyte. The menu's a pan-Asian sampler of stuff that can be put on noodles—curries, teriyaki, Malaysian lakhsa, various Chinese sauces—and is made fresh with your choice of meat chunks. But you know what? Fuck meat. You don't need it. The menu board doesn't mention this, but you can get tofu, and not those wimpy little cubelets, either; Oodle Noodle makes with these big, tasty slabs of Japanese-style fried bean curd. Whatever you pick, it comes in Hollywood-style Chinese takeout boxes and unless you get really fancy (and also buy a drink) it's gonna run you less than eight bucks for as much food as a normal, healthy person can reasonably eat at a sitting. (DZ)

Bestest Fast Food Side Dish

Fries are for meat-and-potatoes people,



Bestest Edmonton Sound

That cardboard-creaking noise of snow crunching underfoot in the dead cold of January. (BG)

and I feel sorry for the weight watchers ordering wilted salads with their 600-calorie greaseburger: for my money, the deep-fried mushrooms from any local Burger Baron (particularly the one on 118 Ave and 125 Street, where they know me by name), are where it's at. Fungus is just damn tasty when it's dipped into a boiling vat of oil, and the Baron's mushrooms are firmer and juicier than any of the other burger joints in town. If you're tired of those pesky arteries of yours, get a little ranch dressing on the side: it's mmmmm good. (DB)

Bestest Menu

Langano Skies at 9920-82 Ave may not have the bestest selection of dishes on their menu (though it's in the running in that category, too) but it definitely boasts the best menu as an actual, physical, designed object. It's big and beautiful, neatly laid out, classy without being one of those pompous leather-bound jobs you find at places I can't afford, and packed with interesting information about Ethiopian history, culture and cuisine. You almost wish

the service were less efficient so you could just sit there and read for a while. Also, it features proper spelling, grammar and punctuation, which are all damned rare. Doesn't anybody check the proofs before menus go to the printer? Or are half of all restaurateurs illiterate? "Apetizer's," my ass. (DZ)

Bestest "I Miss Europe" Place

The cappuccino isn't the same, is it? You're stunned at the limited cheese choices in the supermarket. And suddenly you're an alcoholic consuming what you feel is an incredibly abstemious amount of booze. So where do you go for help (besides back across the Atlantic, of course)? Get thee, O lost wanderer, to a used goods store. "Second-hands" litter the Fair Continent, so you'll be right at home. Plus, they're like mini-Europe, full of old heirlooms and discarded souvenirs. (Er, I mean this as a good thing.) Bohemian crystal cheek-by-jowl English brooches, Baltic amber

SEE NEXT PAGE



thing.) Bohemian crystal cheek-by-jowling English brooches, Baltic amber bracelets next to Soviet-style badges. It's the best! It won't help the liquor troubles, but it will alleviate some of the reverse homesickness. Runner-up: the Bay on sale days, which, while it doesn't actually resemble Europa in any way, does have enough people to kind of suggest someplace besides empty Edmonton. (CA)

Bestest Import

One of the few warm memories I have of a particularly harrowing trip to Jamaica a few years back (who knew Rastafarians were so, um, well armed?) is drinking Red Stripe, a tasty lager served in that standby of nostalgic Canadiana, stubbies. I managed to wangle a couple of cases through customs, but after my stock was quickly depleted I thought I might never taste the delicious brew again—that is, until a handful of local liquor stores and nightspots began carrying the beer this year. So next time you're out on the town and looking for something to wash away the pasties, order up a Red Stripe and imagine yourself vacationing in beautiful Montego Bay, clutching your wallet and running for your life. (RM)

Worstest Awkward Smell

Edmonton, for the most part, is a fairly pleasant-smelling city punctuated by the odd offensive aroma. However, there's nothing more awkward and

unsettling than that turgid fart smell that hovers around certain roads hugging the North Saskatchewan River Valley, especially Jasper Ave, which is enough to completely ruin an otherwise magical first date. (CH)

Bestest Father Fun

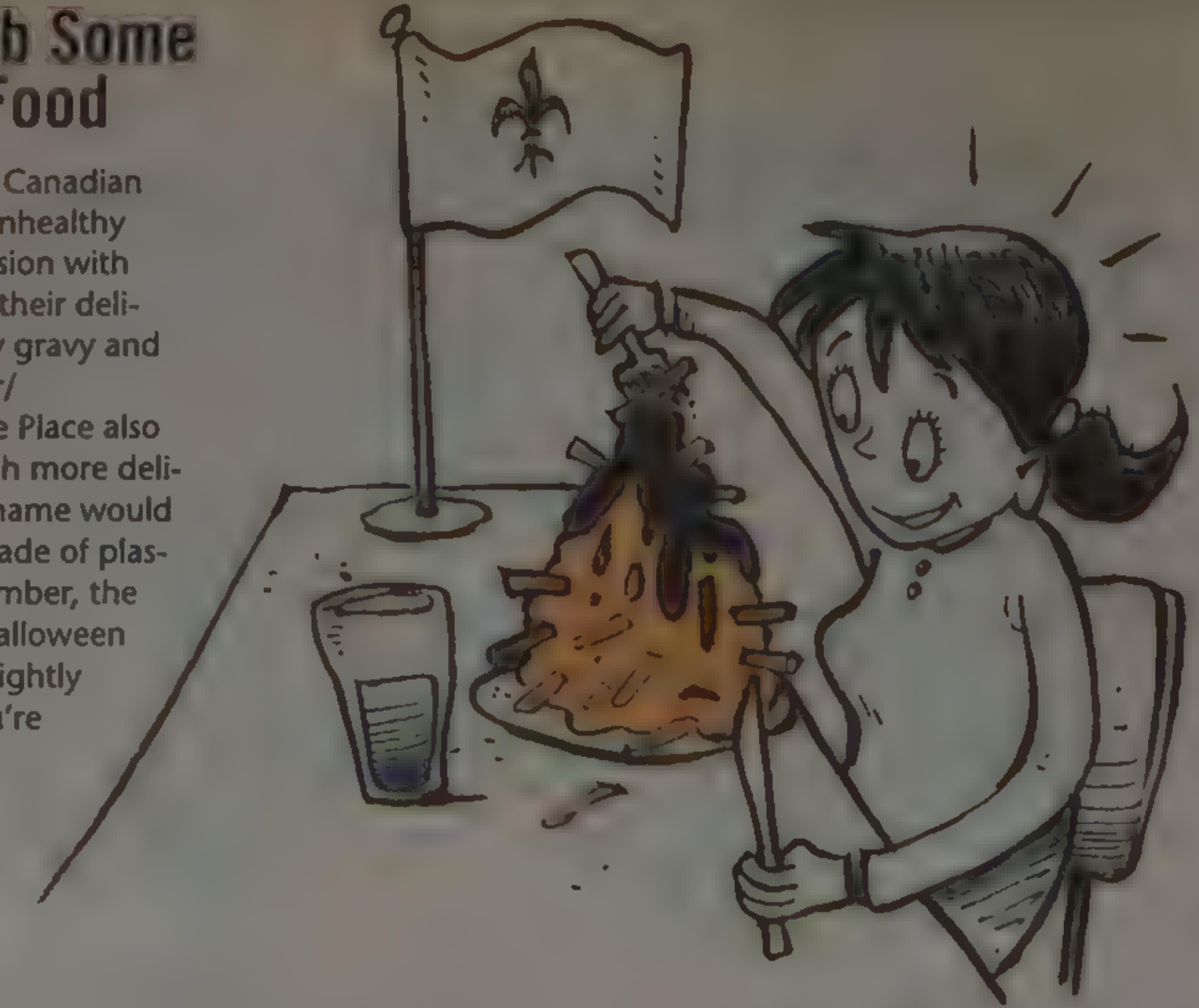
My dad won't thank me for this one, but he's been declaiming the virtues of Saturday Soccer for so long (six yearly celebration tees!) that I thought it was worth a mention. Does your pater slide into boredom of a weekend, thus falling into the dreadful habit of contacting you, wannabe-sleeper-inner, at 7 a.m.? Send him to Saturday Soccer, where he and other like-minded parentals can pound the grass—and each other—into unrecognizable muck! You'd think this would be an everywhere thing, but it ain't: I've lived in lots of places but dad-soccer is a rarity. (Happy add-on: It will solve that awful what-to-wear-with-jeans weekend conundrum as your dad will forever sport with pride his Sat-Soc tee!) (CA)

Bestest Name in Pro Sports

Before this year, you could have debated which Edmonton team boasted the player with the best handle in history. Yes, the Eskimos had Winston October, Jim Germany and the Giz; the Oilers had great names like Rosie Ruzicka and Risto Ruotsalainen. The old Edmonton Flyers boasted Bronco Horvath, while the old hockey Eskimos had "Artful Arthur" Gagne. But no Edmonton-

Bestest Place to Grab Some Québécois Comfort Food

There may not be an ounce of French Canadian blood in my body, but I still have an unhealthy (and boy, do I mean unhealthy) obsession with Québécois comfort foods. Along with their delicious poutine (with vegetarian-friendly gravy and real, squeaky cheese curds), the owner/manager of Le Grand Fromage Poutine Place also makes a mean sugar pie, which is much more delicious (and oddly less sweet) than the name would suggest. It's kind of like eating a pie made of plastic-wrapped Kraft Caramels (you remember, the ones you got by the handful in your Halloween pillowcase?) but infinitely better and slightly grainier. Seriously good stuff when you're looking for a pick-me-up on a cloudy day, or if you're just a displaced Québécois/Québécoise looking for a taste of home. Just be warned that their summer hours are a bit strange. (11)



based athlete, ever, has had as good a name as Cracker-Cats infielder Stubby Clapp. What makes him even cooler is that he has a first given name which has long been forgotten because he'd *rather* you called him Stubby. (SS)

Bestest Name in Amateur Sports

That would go to a 14-year-old by the name of Steele Boomer, who was an offensive star with the South Side Athletic Club this past hockey season. The kid's got a future too—he was snapped up in the second round of the WHL draft by the Kootenay Ice. But with a

name like "Steele Boomer," how can the kid *not* be a star? (SS)

Bestest Non-NHL Hockey

No, it's not the Roadrunners. Nor is it the Golden Bears. No, for the absolute best in edge-of-your-seat ice action, you need look no further than to the University of Alberta's women's intramural league. My wife played for the nursing team and I never missed a game. No, they don't skate anything like the pros, but they make up for it with heart. The games are short and fast with plenty of scoring. (No need to worry about another game stuck in the

middle of the neutral zone.) It's free, too. All you have to do is gather some friends together, head down to the U of A arena and pick a team to cheer for. And be prepared to shout loud. (EM)

Bestest Underdog Sports Hero

Thanks to the NHL lockout, the 2005 Telus University Cup became one of the biggest hockey events in the city. Down by a goal to the University of Saskatchewan with less than a minute left in the final, University of Alberta forward Ben Thomson scores the tying

SEE PAGE 14

A collage of images related to training and technology. It features a woman in a suit looking at a computer screen, a Microsoft Office logo, and several course banners for "Microsoft Office Specialist" and "Microsoft Office Application". The collage also includes a banner for "Tech Skills + Soft Skills = Unparalleled Opportunities" and a "new" course banner for "Microsoft Office Specialist / Microsoft Office Application".



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goal—and then bags the championship-winner in OT. "I almost peed my pants," said Thomson of the ovation he received from over 10,000 fans at Rexall Place. Nice to see some guys are still playing for the love of the game. (SS)

Bestest Free Entertainment (Winter)

Lockout, shmockout. For pure unadulterated human drama, nothing beats showing up at a local rink to watch a random group of cherubic, rosy-cheeked youngsters pound the living hell out of each other while their psychotic, wild-eyed parents smoosh their frothing muzzles up to the glass, feverishly chanting their respective mantras ("SKAAAAAAAATE! SKAAAAAAAATE!") and treating some gangly teenage referee as if he were single-handedly responsible for the Asian tsunami, September 11 and the continued dominance of the federal Liberal party. Oh, and between periods, you wouldn't believe how good the food is in some of these places—no booze, of course, but it occurs to me that if God didn't want us drinking at minor hockey games, he would've made a six-pack of beer way harder to hide in a winter coat. (RM)

Bestest Free Entertainment (Summer)

Sadly, this year's Gay Pride Parade got hit with some less-than-fabulous weather, but those of you who decided to skip the fun to stay warm and dry still have almost two months left to catch Edmonton's twice-weekly Straight Pride Parade. What's this? You weren't aware of this event? Admittedly, it's not all that well-publicized, but every Friday and Saturday night from now until September you can catch the pageantry and excitement, the garish outfits and tasteless displays, the loud noises and flashy autos that wend their way down Whyte Avenue in a celebration of young men and their insatiable lust for young women. If we're lucky, come Canada Day we might

even get to see the Straight Pride Parade crash right into the Edmonton Police Service's Festival of Unnecessary Force, a confluence we haven't seen in a good five years or so. (RM)

Bestest Tree

Amidst the bare expanse of surface parking, office towers and brand-new particle board condominiums, a relic of an earlier era stands tall and proud. From the pseudo-Spanish courtyard of the El Mirador, a magnificent spruce stretches five stories high and dwarfs the hacienda meant to contain it. The tree might have been planted when the original building was constructed in 1936, or could have been a central feature in the architectural plans. Either way, I love gazing at it and imagining the havoc its root structure wreaks upon the building's plumbing. (CT)

Bestest Spot for Crane-Watching

I don't have a clue where to send you to watch the birds, but if you want to watch the construction equipment, take a seat outside the University Hospital's east entrance. I can't help but marvel at the towering machines that spend their days swinging heavy-duty construction material back and forth around the site, with all sorts of traffic swarming all around. I do admit to feeling a little uneasy the day I saw the crane lift a portable toilet high into the sky, but I'm happy to report that the crane operator deposited the box safely at the opposite end of the site. (EM)

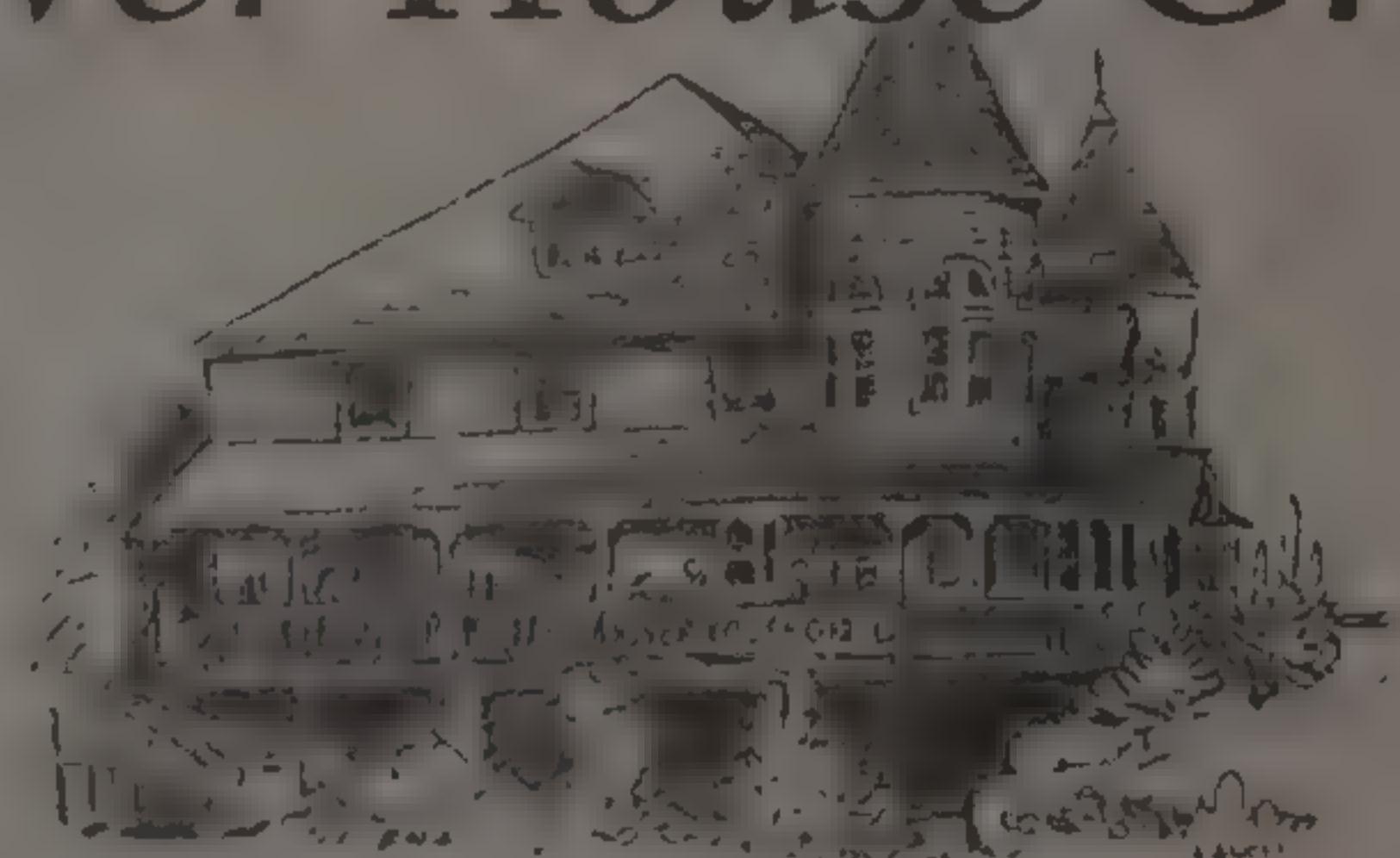
Bestest Place to See All the Cranes at the U of A at the Same Time

Take the high ground in Ezio Faraone Park, park it on a bench or in the gazebo, and as the sun sets, the U of A campus glows in pink. See tuition dollars at work. (CN)

Bestest Place to Go to Forget About Edmonton's Godforsaken Climate

The AgFor tropical display greenhouse is one of those open secrets that Uni-

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versity of Alberta students have shared for as long as the thing has been in existence. If you've never been, it's like stepping into a hot, humid jungle that just happens to be connected by pedway to the Students' Union Building. There's a waterfall, a pond, a spiral staircase, tropical plants and an assortment of birds that were apparently abandoned by their owners over the years. Which also means you really shouldn't pay a visit unless you're wearing something that you can afford to get a little bit of bird poop on (i.e., not before that senior-level sociology presentation worth 60 per cent of your final mark that you dressed up so nicely for). If you're not a U of A student (and therefore probably shouldn't be hanging around the campus, you intellectual poseur you), then the atrium at the Citadel Theatre always makes for a nice break on a -25°C day. Of course, if you've got a bit of spare change under the couch cushions, you should really check out Muttart Conservatory, if you haven't already. While the AgFor "jungle" and the Citadel garden are the equivalent of a climatic free sample, the Muttart is the full meal deal. (II)

Bestest Streetcorner Dancer

I don't know if it's a Callingwood phenomenon, but on the corner of Whitmud Drive and 178 Street heading west, I often see a young man dancing with wild abandon. I'm usually in my car, on my way home from hipper

Bestest Hangover Breakfast on the North Side



My money's on the Silk Hat, Edmonton's oldest restaurant and truest greasy spoon. The potatoes are real—not those deep-fried-if-I-wanted-fries-I-would-have-asked-for-them cubes; the bacon is always crispy, but not too crispy; the eggs generally arrive how you want them; and the servers always straddle that hair-thin line between crusty and friendly. And now that we're all non-smoking, you won't have to walk through any bluish smog at the front—but the non-smoking may just be what sends the servers over the brink. (CN)

neighbourhoods, waiting for the light to change, and there he is, shaking his groove thing. Why is he there? What is he doing? Isn't he embarrassed? I've decided not to care. He's a dancing machine and, while not as varied in his funk routines as the kid who would stand outside dressed as a clown for Grower Direct a few summers ago, there's a glee about him that always brightens my day. Thank you, dancing

man, whoever you are! The boring streetcorners of Edmonton need more of you! (JA)

Bestest-Looking LRT Station

While most Edmonton LRT stations are nowhere near as creatively decorated as those in, say, Montréal, Bay station is a very notable exception.

SEE NEXT PAGE

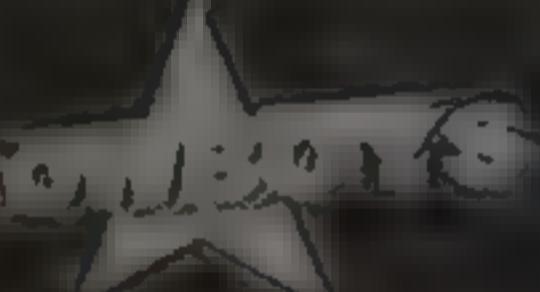
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BESTEST OF EDMONTON

The shiny metal strips along the walls that turn into the ceiling, reflecting the blues and greys of the surrounding tiles, along with the wonderfully colourful tile benches that radiate a warm glow in the cool, futuristic environs. It's all so refreshing after enduring the joylessly utilitarian stations further up the line. While stations like Churchill and Central are certainly good at sticking to a unified design theme, their design theme is Ugly with a capital U. I have high hopes for some of the new stations on the south LRT extension, but Bay, complete with its now-obsolete name, will always occupy a special place in my heart. (II)

Bestest Time Warp Décor

In a modern city such as ours, where the ruins of Heritage Mall could easily be considered a historical site, it's nice to know that there are a few places in town where "reno" is one of those scrub-your-mouth-with-soap four-letter words. Located in the charming Epcor substation and abandoned parking lot district of 105 Avenue and 104 Street, The Ling-nan has been serving scrumptious classic Chinese since 1964, and their floor-to-ceiling red, black and gold décor has apparently never changed in all that time. Just about every wall flaunts a different lushly kitsch motif. Be dazzled with daydreams of taking the roadster to the Copa after a dinner of chop suey

and lemon chicken until you're distracted by your Technicolor drink menu placemat boasting Pink Ladies and Old-Fashioneds straight from the *Playboy* barmate annual of 1965. (LC)

Bestest Waterfall (By Default)

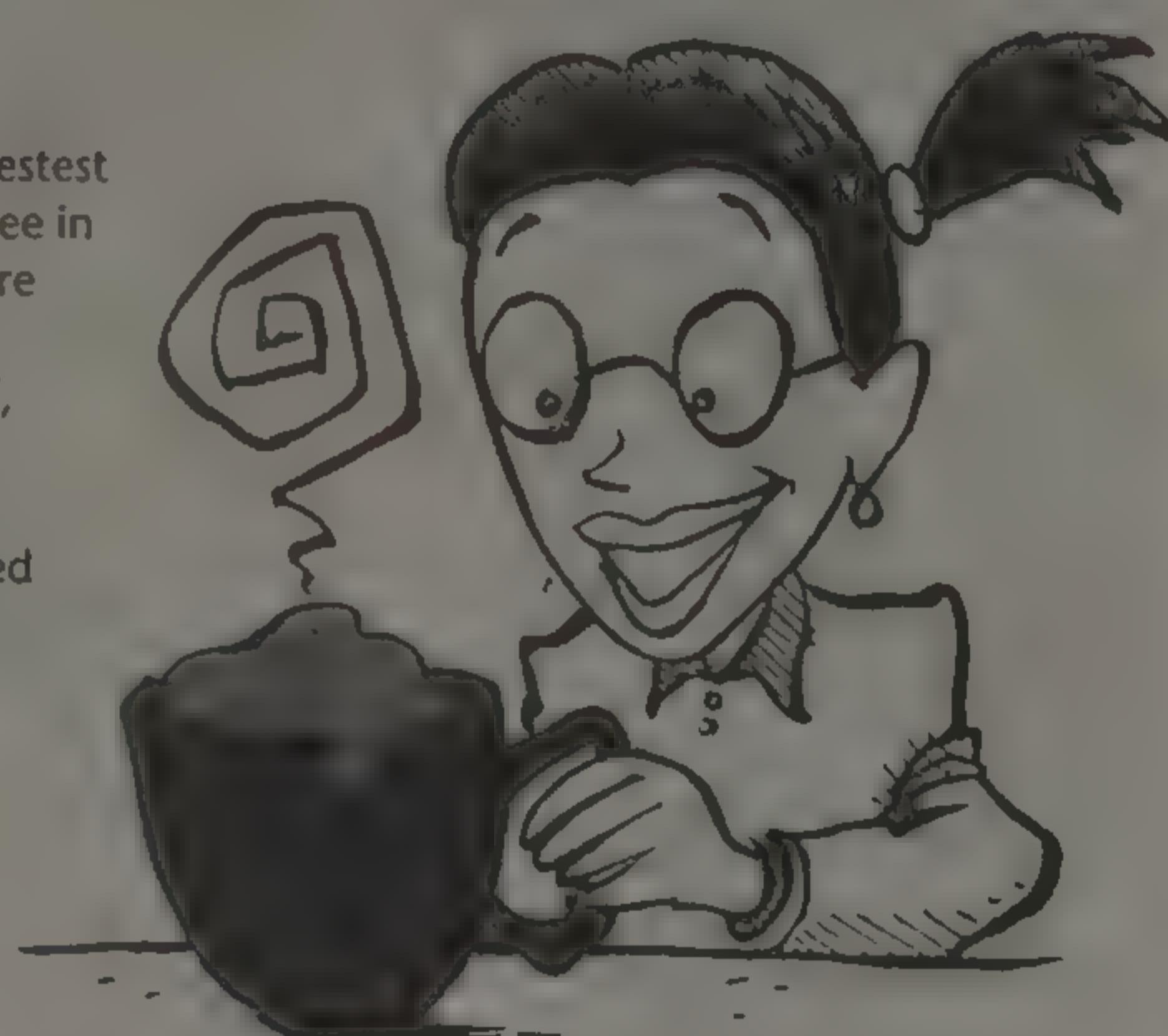
Love it or hate it, Churchill Square does at least boast a waterfall that's a little classier than the garden hose that's sprayed off the side of the High Level Bridge. (SS)

Bestest Way to Save on Tuition

It may come as a surprise to the non-academics among us, but most courses at this city's colleges and university do not take attendance, and with class

Bestest Cappuccino

Notice how the title reads "Bestest Cappuccino" instead of "Bestest Coffee"? See, when it comes to declaring a bestest cup of coffee in Edmonton, there's plenty of competition, and a lot of places are tied for first in my books. But in the cappuccino category, there's no contest: Leva really is in a class of its own. First of all, the person making your drink isn't a fresh hire with an hour of training on the espresso machine. Far from it. Leva's standards are much, much higher than that, from the top-notch imported Danesi beans to the beautiful finished presentation. They take their espresso seriously, and the resulting cappuccinos are ludicrously good. And second, just look at the back of the shop. I mean, these people share their café space with a high-end commercial espresso machine shop, and have years of expert technical experience within shouting distance, whereas the dudes at the chain coffee shops have what? Training manuals? Like I said, no contest. (II)



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sizes in the triple digits, it's nearly impossible for administrators at these institutions to exercise any control over random citizens randomly wandering into classes. So to those of you who always wanted to attend a post-secondary institution but lacked the funds (or, you know, brains) to get in, I say just show up anyway. Sure, you won't end up with a "transcript" or "marks" or a "diploma," but to be honest, neither do a lot of the people who paid to be there. (RM)

Bestest Shit-Disturbers

While this isn't necessarily a wholesale endorsement of their entire platform (socialism is, after all, so 1917), the provincial New Democratic Party caucus deserves kudos for being such an utter annoyance to the Klein Tories of late. Whether they're holding a minister's feet to the fire over an extremely fishy land deal or pointing out the twisted logic inherent in claiming to lower taxes while upping Alberta Health Care premiums, Edmonton's four plucky NDP members have shown that they truly understand the meaning of the word "opposition." Too bad they're a bunch of radical pinko tree-hugging homos, at least in the eyes of Joe Albertan. (RM)

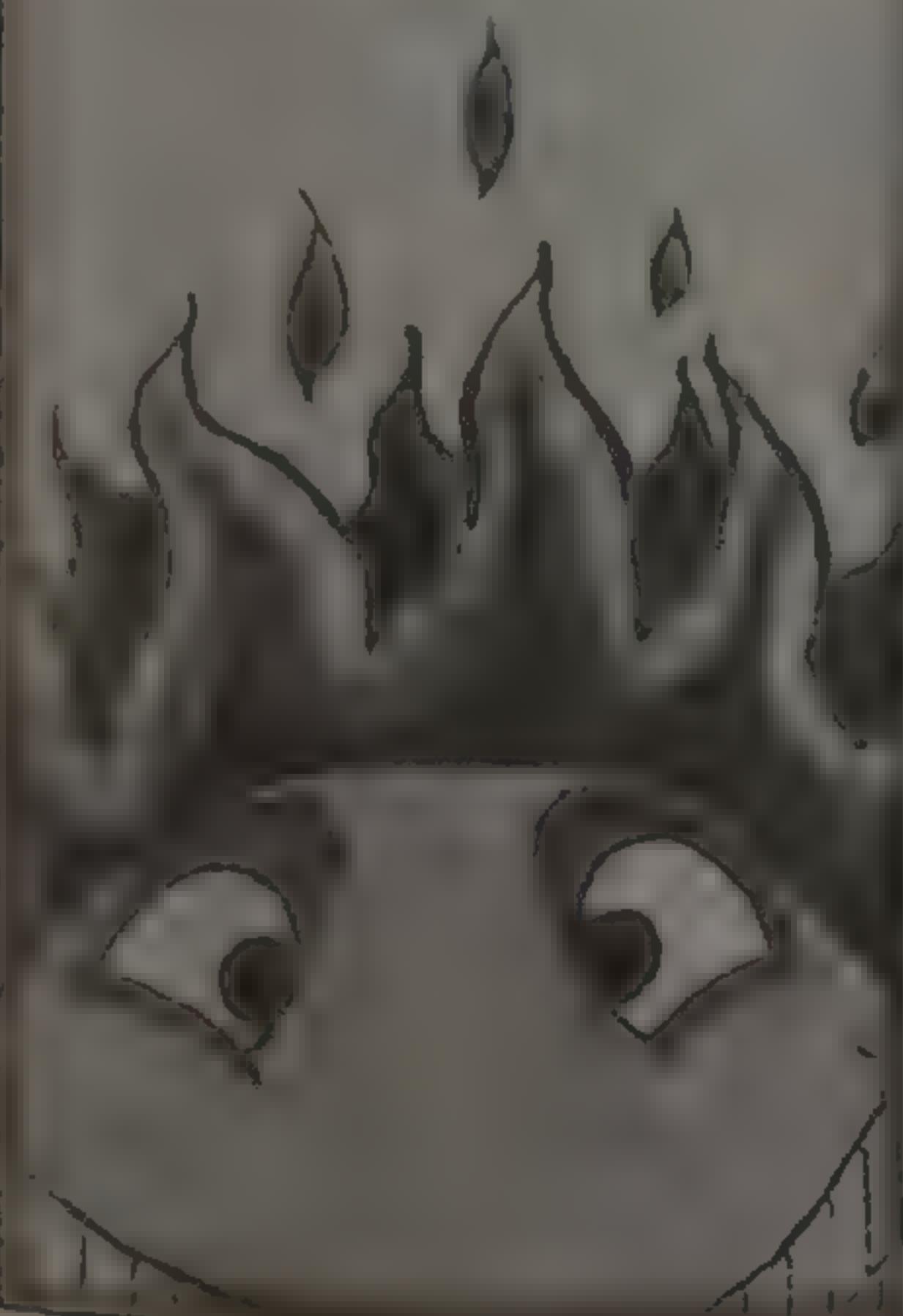
Bestest Long-Overdue Idea

When former mayor Bill Smith defended his opposition to LRT expansion by

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espousing his belief that "Edmontonians love their cars too much," the collective outrage of our city's non-driving public boiled over into a mass revolt—or, at least, it would have, had they not been too busy trying to get from work to school to home on a transit system that makes Kelowna's look good. (Seriously.) So it was with some disbelief that those of us who somehow survive without an Escalade in the driveway greeted the news that City Council has committed itself to almost doubling our LRT system by 2009 and is presently considering a light rail link to the west end. Okay, so it's not quite the Paris Metro yet—hell, it's not even the C-Train—but at least this will keep Edmonton from turning into a colder, less fabulous Los Angeles for a while, anyways. (RM)

Bestest Graffiti

In the brickwork on the left side of that old theatre on Whyte just before the Mill Creek bridge (you know, the Sai Baba place with "Help Ever, Hurt Never" on the marquee and those cool bubble windows) there is a message, best seen from across the road. The message is "Reggie," spelled out in contrasting bricks, some awesome bricklayer's indestructible tag. I keep throwing this one out there in the hope someone can identify Reggie or point out other examples of bricklayer tree-pissing. (DZ)

Bestest Graffiti Hot Spot

From the silhouettes of little blackbirds

with voice bubbles that say "listen" in quill-style font to the angry, scrawled denunciations of the *Sun*, *Post* and *Globe* on bench ads and paperboxes, the intersection of 86 Ave and 109 Street offers the most furious graffiti political debates in the city. If *Dose* wants to tap into the *vox populi*, it should get a taste of the bitter medicine splashed across its Plexiglas boxes. Then step into either washroom at Remedy and tinkle slowly away as you read the half-philosophical, half-alcoholic musings, debates and insults that have been scribbled on the walls, inside the stalls and above the urinal. (BG)

Bestest Graffiti Stencil

Though I have to give credit to whoever slapped the Robocop stencil on the apartment building at the top of Bellamy Hill, it's still no match for the five-foot wonder that is the Mac's garbage bin. Located on the back of the Whyte Ave Mac's, this stencil—easily the biggest in the city, and complete with stink lines for extra ambience—is not only a physical triumph for whoever managed to get it up without being noticed, it's also the perfect harbinger for what lies within that den of inequity and two-dollar beef jerky. (DB)

Bestest Hill for Bike Riding

As you head west on Saskatchewan Drive towards Groat Road, stop pedaling and get low to decrease wind resistance. Enjoy the feeling of moving as



fast as a car for a brief while. Steep enough to pick up a hefty head of steam, but not so steep that you need to use brakes, if you time it right, you can reach the entrance to Hawrelak Park without spinning a pedal. You'll have to find a different way to get back up the hill, though. (DB)

Bestest Place to Tie the Knot

Everybody thinks that theirs was the perfect place to wed, but since they're not writing this, the bestest wedding venue is Muttart Conservatory. The bride and groom can have their ceremony and take pictures in any of four beautifully sculpted gardens. What better way to have an outdoor wedding totally independent of Edmonton's weather conditions? The bestest part is that this city-

owned attraction offers more reasonable fees than most other venues, which means that the budget-conscious couple can actually afford their Day in a gorgeous setting. (CT)

Bestest Place to Burn Out Your Retinas

Wandering the Legislature grounds at night offers the immature a playground of various delights. There's some fun skateboarding, great urban biking and many great hang-out and make-out spots. And then there is Purple City. If you look directly into the floodlights that set the hallowed halls of the Leg aglow—not for too long—and then look at the giant dome, it's all purple, dude. The effect is especially stunning in the winter, where everything white turns lilac. (CN)

Bestest Security Guard

It feels a little strange to hand out warm fuzzies to a glorified mall cop, but the guy who patrols the Legislature grounds after dark has to be the city's most pragmatic and lenient authority figure. The level of tomfoolery that he tolerates varies from night to night, but expect to get away with public drunkenness, brief nudity, minor drug use and a rousing game of Marco Polo in the reflecting pool without attracting anything more sinister than a casual warning from an unarmed grandfather who smells vaguely of Old Spice and gin. (RM)

Bestest Addition to the *Edmonton Journal*

Man oh man, but is the daily sudoku puzzle addictive or what? The rules—

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fill all the squares in a nine-by-nine grid so that every row, column and three-by-three subgrid contains the numerals 1 to 9 inclusive—couldn't be simpler; you don't even need to know how to read in order to solve them. (Although why an illiterate would pick up the *Journal* in the first place is beyond me. Isn't that what *Dose* is for? Zing!) As a professional crossword constructor, I maintain that over the long haul, sudoku puzzles are all too much alike to provide the kind of varied, unpredictable intellectual pleasures offered by the Sunday *New York Times* crossword, but for now, filling in the *Journal* sudoku (plus the puzzles available online at the Daily Sudoku) has become such an ingrained habit, I've even started thinking about filling in imaginary grids as I lie in bed at night, waiting to fall asleep. It's only a matter of time before I start dreaming about them too. (PM)

Worstest Place to Meet an Internet Lover for the First Time

Safety first: plan your meeting somewhere public, in case the person's a freak. However, don't pick the new face of totalitarian Churchill Square. The broad, intimidating expanse of beige concrete carries echoes of every junior high school dance's interminable gymnasium floor. Dodging tweaked-out skaters and spanglers won't bring the two of you closer together either. Perhaps you could

challenge each other to come up with the most creative responses to the hair-trigger police presence? I hear those guys have great senses of humour. (CT)

Bestest Place to Meet Members of the Opposite Sex

That downtown gay bar the Roost is a good place to seek out a casual sexual encounter isn't exactly news, but *Vue* readers may be surprised to learn that a good number of those semi-anonymous hook-ups have been resulting in heterosexual sex. Blame the mainstreaming of gay culture or the lack of good dance clubs, but for all the drag queens, house music and poppers, it turns out that the Roost is probably Edmonton's best place for attractive, open-minded young men to meet attractive, open-minded young women. You almost have to feel bad for the true blue (true pink?) homosexuals: the Roost used to be gayer than a picnic basket, and now all of a sudden they're stuck at a breeder meat market. Oh well; at least they'll always have Boots.... (RM)

Bestest Place to Play Frisbee in Order to Impress Girls

The Legislature grounds. (CT)

Bestest Place to Be Unimpressed by Guys Playing Frisbee

The Legislature grounds. (CT)

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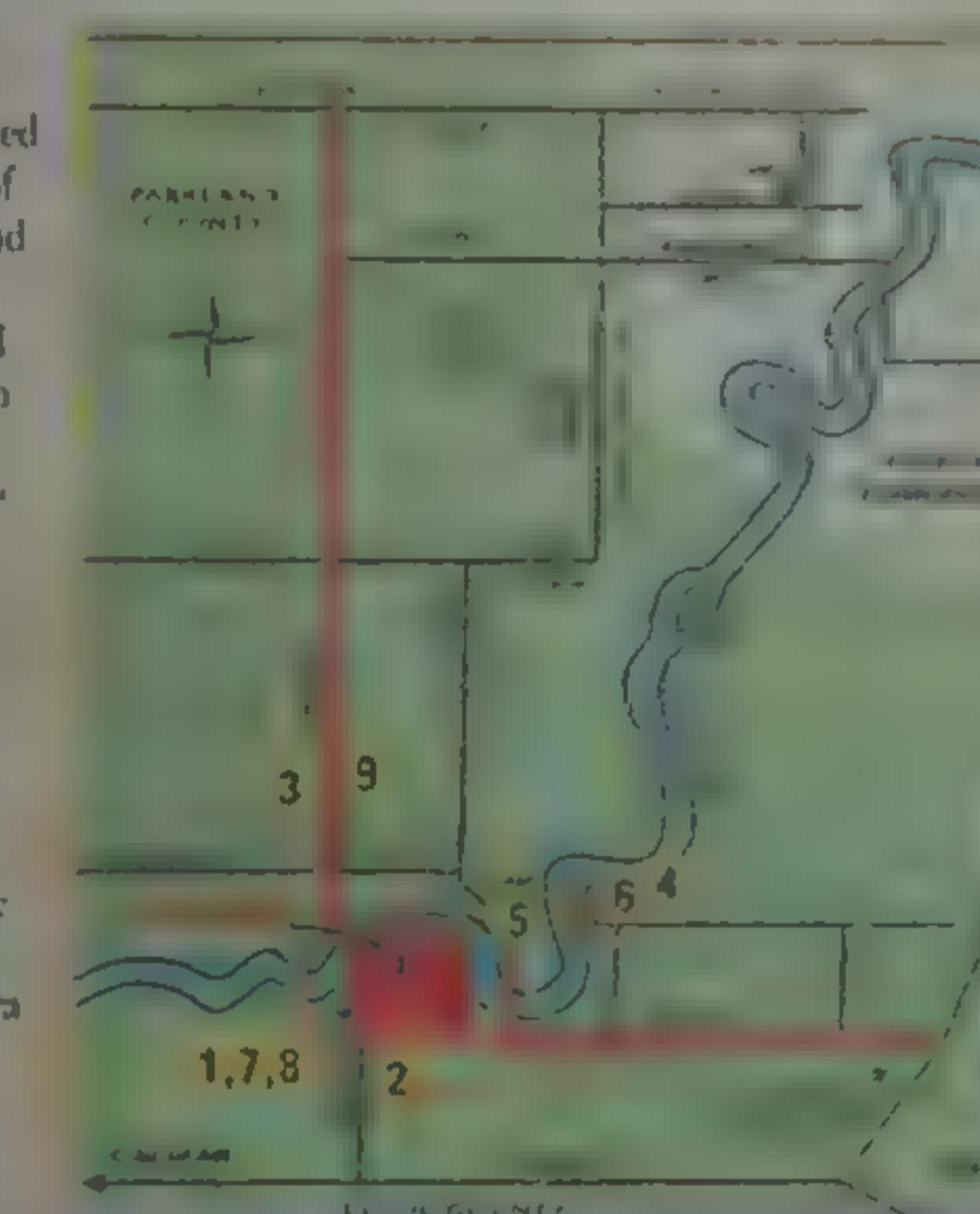
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Built in 1986 and situated beside Rabbit Hill Ski Area, Shalom Park has become recognized as one of the top ten water ski facilities in the world. This picturesque lake provides ideal conditions for skiers of any level wishing to perfect their skills. Phone (780) 955-9128

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A scenic 18 hole public golf course situated in Devon's beautiful river valley. With a full licensed lounge/restaurant, excellent proshop and practice facilities, and new conference/banquet facilities, this course offers everything you might need. Phone (780) 987-3569

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Bestest Place to Play Frisbee

Rundle Park. Two words: Frisbee Golf!
(CT)

Bestest Open-Air Drinking

With some exceptions, Edmonton's bestest open-air drinking location is, well, *everywhere*. Yeah, if you're walking right down Whyte while brazenly sucking on a Pil supercan, you're gonna get an open-container ticket, and maybe a public intoxication, and probably a couple other hassle citations for deterrent purposes. But stay off the heatscore highway and the pleasant lanes and alleys of our green and sunny summertime city are perfect for taking a couple beers for a walk or passing a cold bottle of bottom-shelf Riesling between old friends. Reclaim your right to sip 'n' stroll! Also, don't litter. (DZ)

Bestest Alleyway

Edmonton is full of alleyways slashing between buildings for countless blocks, these narrow lanes of cracked asphalt, garbage scows and telephone poles running off into the distance. But looking from the soccer fields behind the Lister Hall residences at the University of Alberta, the alleyway between 84 and 85 Ave is an especially memorable strip. This back street intersects with 117 Street at a diagonal, extends for just a few blocks and is shrouded by leafy trees in the summer. Winter offers an aisle of snow between small garages, rickety fences and hibernating

gardens, while spring brings puddles and a scruffy, weatherbeaten look. (BG)

Bestest Strip

Long overshadowed by its flakier, Starbucks-saturated counterpart to the south, Jasper Avenue is finally starting to resemble the main drag of a cosmopolitan North American city. Spurred on in equal parts by the much-touted downtown "revitalization" plan and by the emergence of a handful of diverse and hopping night spots, Jasper Avenue looks like a logical alternative to the woefully trashy Whyte Avenue, which has become nothing more than the breeding ground for a terrifying race of Smirnoff Ice-drinking, fake ID-toting, American Eagle-outfitted monsters, brawling with cops and crashing their dads' SUVs into one another on their way back to Sherwood Park. (RM)

Bestest Source for Unique, Cheap, Last-Minute Gifts

Uh-oh! The birthday party is tonight, and you've got, like, 20 bucks with which to pick up a gift *and* BYOB. You don't have enough time to get crafty, gift certificates clearly display *exactly* how cheap/poor you are and cash money's even worse. That's what the Old Strathcona Antique Mall is for. Scores of indie dealers have their own display booths, and pretty much anything for anybody can be found in the two-level space. Cool ashtrays, weird

Worstest Construction Worker: The Sequel

In last year's Bestest of Edmonton, James Elford identified the worst construction worker in the city, but this year it seems that a team of labourers are determined to knock the champion off his perch. While driving over the new 111 Street overpass, I glanced over towards the still-unfinished southbound road and saw this year's winners. Now, I'm sure that these construction workers are normally a hard-working bunch. I mean, they *did* manage to get the northbound half of the road open in just under a month. But what I saw that day did little to support that assertion. Four of them—yes, four—were standing around tossing what looked to me like a small metal disc. I shouldn't be too hard on them, though; maybe they're planning to make a run for the world Frisbee championships and are practising with the metal warm-up disc. (EM)



old posters, sweet belt buckles, old newspapers and magazines (birth-month souvenirs!), bar accessories... if you can stave off sensory overload, you *will* find something rad. There's another place like this (Rocky Mountain) down the road a piece, but I've never been there because the Old Strathcona mall is closer and I've never come out unsatisfied. Plus, walking down Gateway sucks. (DZ)

Bestest Birthday Party Venue

It may be no competition against my childhood memories of sixth birthday dinners in the company of a certain animatronic moose and squirrel band, but Chuck E. Cheese's is still, as the slogan goes, where a kid (and the occasional legal adult) can be a kid.

The new-school incarnation of Mr. Cheese is an X-treme sport-loving, grinning rat, but thankfully, he still stands for the same things he always did: underage gambling and questionable pizza. Once you get past the fear of mowing down swarms of knee-high fellow customers and acclimate yourself to the humid stink of what I suspect is a combination of pizza and schoolyard disease, the world of cheap Skee-Ball and Whack-a-Mole is yours for the taking. Top the evening off by getting Chuck himself to sing you "Happy Birthday," then rubbing it in to the 16-year old in the rat suit that you're washing that mittfull of complimentary cake down with a paper cup of Chuck E's house wine. (LC)

Bestest Place to Reaffirm Your Adulthood

A few months ago, my husband was worried that because we never go out dancing we might no longer be young and exciting. Also worried that this might be true, I took him to the club closest to our house, West Edmonton Mall's Rum Jungle. I've been there a couple of times for various stagette parties and will (sheepishly) admit to having had loads of fun, but on this particular night, perhaps on account of our marital status or maybe the cycles of the moon, we felt... ummm... out of place. We weren't in our early twenties. We weren't on the make. We weren't shuffling to the music in cliques or sipping our drinks with put-on indifference, hoping we were cool. It was a

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good reminder that "young and exciting" can also be "excruciatingly awkward," and we went home happy with our lot in life and grateful to finally be grown-ups. (Incidentally, I think it is my duty to report that "Thunderstruck," "Baby Got Back" and "Mr. Vain" were still being played to great enthusiasm from the crowd. Okay, "Thunderstruck" and "B.G.B." are classics, but "Mr Vain"? That was bad in 1994, wasn't it? Yeesh.) (JA)

Bestest Rap Song About Edmonton

This is admittedly a narrow category, only slightly larger than "Bestest Death Metal Song About Barrhead" or "Bestest Twelve-Tone Opera About Lac la Biche," but even if Edmonton unexpectedly mushrooms into the next hip-hop hotbed alongside Atlanta or St. Louis, the jittery rhythms of Cadence Weapon's "Oliver Square" will still likely reign supreme as Edmonton's unofficial rap anthem. Whether he's talking about drinking in the IGA parking lot, cleverly name-checking the Black Dog, New City, the Victory Lounge and the Funky Pickle or actually finding a rhyme for "Nik Kozub," Cadence Weapon's intricate wordplay more than lives up to his boast that he's even "more dangerous than Millwoods." (PM)

Bestest Thing Instead of Ads

It's nice to sit on the bus and, instead of being treated to an illustration of what a sexy, sassy, go-anywhere, nose-

pierced, bollocks-to-you, funky urban bitch goddess Alesse will allow you to be, you get to read a poem. Some of the stuff on the "Poetry Route" is pretty dire—it's poetry, after all—but a lot of it is quite affecting, especially the stuff from people in elementary and junior high school. I hope their parents don't lean on them to take science or engineering or whatever so they can "get a good job, and have writing as a hobby!" Ugh, I can hear the patronizing tone of voice they'll say it in too. Bleah. Don't give up, kids! (DZ)

Worstest Placement of a Big-Ass TV

With cellphones, inadequately trained drivers and sheer stupidity so rampant on our streets, whose idea was it to mount not one but two televisions on Calgary Trail? It's not like they're broadcasting important messages about road conditions. Instead, they're billboards that distract the eye with perpetual motion. Has anyone studied accident increases since these monstrosities were installed? Or measured the homicidal impulses of the hotel guests across the street who are forced to stare at these soundless commercial kaleidoscopes all night? (CT)

Worstest Thing to Lose to a Fire This Year (So Far)

It's a tight race, but my vote goes to Hub Cigar. Those creaky old floors that

SEE NEXT PAGE

Bestest of Edmonton: local music edition!

BY WHITEY HOUSTON

Ah, Edmonton: what a wonderful place to live and work as a musician. What do we have left? A handful of venues (one of which is a steakhouse), a smattering of festivals, 20 minutes of coverage a year from MuchMusic. As the Buzzcocks once opined, "What do I get? Oh oh, what do I get?"

Well, Edmonton, we do have a fairly tight, nicely inbred little musical community where stylistic boundaries are blurred in a haze of alcohol and hoarfrost. What I find most amazing about Edmonton is how long we've gone without producing a star. I'm not talking about the folks who lived here for five months and moved on to bigger things, I'm talking about bona fide, red-carpet-treatment stars who are card-carrying, River-City-boosting Edmontonians. There are none! Oh oh, what do we get instead? Here's our small de facto list of what's what.

Bestest-Kept Drumming Secret

Crazy old Carl, the chipped-toothed, 20-pound ball of sweat and barbed comments. Carl is easily the best untapped drumming talent this city never seems to want to take advantage of. He's not a technical guy, but when he goes bananas he's equal parts Keith Moon and Iguanas-era Iggy Pop. Honourable mention goes to the guy who programs the beats in

Uncle Outrage: spot-on hilarity.

Bestest Band Prankster

True, giving your bandmates the time-honoured chicken-in-a-basket or a dry-dock is churlishly funny, but nothing comes remotely close to Blair Piggott's syphilis hijinx. When you drop a dime on both Fish Griwkowsky and your own brother to the STD clinic, you enter a whole new realm of ha-ha.

Worstest Band Name

Mourning Wood, Ten Inch Men, Smulpragus (dude, that's Sugarplums in reverse), Corb Lund Band... the list is pretty long, but the cherry on top of this crap-heap is Mike Boroditsky's Vaginal Blood Farts.

Bestest Band Name

Lazersnake with a "z" is goddamn delightful.

Bestest Band Whore

While there are plenty of Edmonton drummers (ahem... Scott Davidchuk) who get passed around like a drunk cheerleader at a frat party, no one plays more shows with more bands than organist Doug Organ. He's our whoriest whore, and he's got an equally impressive porn star marquee name!

Bestest Rehearsal Space

Most rehearsal spaces are either feces-encrusted commercial jam spaces (Studio City), dank, smelly basements

(Bad Manors) or freezing, converted car holes (all of suburbia). Choke's space is so cavernous you get winded walking to the bathroom.

Bestest Studio Experience

There's a tonne of great recording studios in Edmonton, but only one where you sip 40-year-old Taylor Fladgate while perusing the world's most impressive Brigitte Bardot memorabilia collection between takes. That would be Ian Martin's retardedly swank space-age bachelor pad, the Twilight Livingroom.

Bestest Restaurant With Which to Impress Out-of-Town Bands
Mosaics can wait until the morning—try a round of po' boys at Dadeo or the buffet at Haweli.

Bestest Afro

Even the 104 Ave skateboarding kid with the two-foot follicular sphere can't beat Gary McGowan's majestic gilded cone. Like the Ark of the Covenant, you can't look directly at it or it will melt your face off!

Worstest Drunk

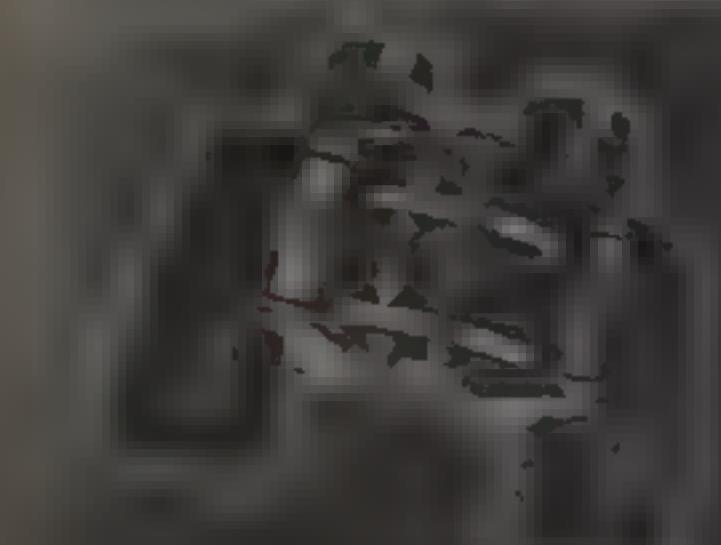
Paul Bellows can fall off a barstool like no one else and Ted Wright's erratic under-the-table urination is appalling, but for downright surliness, the prize goes to Shawn "Swifty" Jonasson. I dare you to answer a cellphone in front of him after he's had five beers. ☺



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BESTEST OF EDMONTON

continued from page 21

were all wobbly and warped, the imported British sweets and that crazy sign dangling above the street made Hub Cigar so much more than just a garden-variety newsstand. When I walked into Hub to pick up a copy of *Le Devoir* or check if the new *Maison-neuve* had arrived, I felt a wonderful connection with the past that you just don't find at many other places in Edmonton. The magazine and newspaper selection was absolutely amazing, the staff was always friendly and the quirky atmosphere made browsing for the perfect mag all the more fun. With all the changes that Whyte Ave has seen in the past decade, from hip street with groovy little shops to its present-day incarnation as the destination of choice for drunken violent idiots who like to smash stuff up, Hub Cigar was always a reassuring constant, and one of the few things that brought me back to the neighbourhood. Plus, for you hipsters, there's the added irony of a cigar store being lost to fire. The new location, while appreciated, just isn't the same, and I can't wait to see them back in their rebuilt digs. (II)

Worlest Drug Trend

Everyone is up in arms about the supposed proliferation of crystal meth in E-Town, but from my vantage point, I can't help but notice a far less affordable cheap thrill making an implausible comeback at our city's better nightspots. Is it just me, or is everyone in every club in Edmonton doing coke all of a sudden? I mean, really, people, what is this, 1985? Between the nose candy in the bathroom and the suspiciously Duran Duran-esque music being blasted from the speakers, you'd think this entire city's nightlife was trapped in a particularly uninteresting episode of *Miami Vice*. Not that I have any moral objection to this kind of thing, but come on now, kids, couldn't we be a little more... I don't know... creative? Salvia, for instance, is becoming readily available around town, and everyone and their dog seems to be selling shrooms these days, so let's take

it down a notch, shall we? (RM)

Bestest Empire of Vice

The Tops empire of liquor, pornography and convenience goods emporia stretches from 74th to 107th Streets like some kind of Maginot Line defending Edmonton against sobriety and healthy attitudes toward women. The 102 Street location is especially awesome: there's the liquor store below and a pornoteria, with its bewildering array of sale-pricing schemes, above, all next door to a Money Mart and a karate dojo. Around the corner from H2O Lounge, it's like a hoser mall over there. All that block needs is a bong shop and a guy selling Harley flags and tiger rugs from the back of an Econoline and it'd be so perfect I'd never leave. (DZ)

Bestest Stretch of Roadwork

The newly opened overpass at 111 Street and 9th Avenue is a beautiful development for those traveling along that route without a car. You see, up until recently, anyone on either foot or bike had to risk their life traveling along the loose gravel that stood in for the practically nonexistent shoulder of the old, winding road. This new stretch is certainly nothing special to look at—it is just a road, after all—but its all-important sidewalk is certain to be a lifesaver for pedestrians and bikers alike. (EM)

Bestest Fun Political Protest

Every Friday at 5 p.m., hundreds of skateboarders and cyclists gather at City Hall for Critical Mass, a gathering meant to demonstrate the ridiculousness of using a motor vehicle as personal transportation. Instead of changing and waving placards, though, Critical Mass looks more like a party—it's almost as if the idea is to shame people into giving up their cars by showing them how much more fun the party-hearty cyclists and skaters are having. My only suggestion is to add some street hockey—get stuffy, suit-wearing commuters out of their SUVs

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The Edmonton Express

Bestest Location for an Unmade Cheesy Teen Slasher Flick

Everyone and their dog knows about the closed Charles Camell Hospital, with dozens more making claims (most likely false) of having stayed overnight inside its creepy exteriors, but in reality the place is boarded up tight and remains under constant police surveillance. But with a white bedsheet and some courage (i.e., booze) you can hang around in the shadows and scare away meddlesome mystery-solving kids and their dogs. Just don't be too surprised if the cops haul you away. (CH)

Worstest-Spelled Business Name

Enjoying an overpriced chai latte on one of the tiny patios on the north side of Jasper Ave at 112 Street a couple of years ago, I notice a glaring error on the awning of the Gabbana Restaurant across the way. The restaurant boasts "casual dinning." I say glaring, because once you start looking at it, you can't stop. I had the opportunity to stop by Maggie Walt's clothing store a couple doors away from the casual dinning, on some business—in two years, I had never even noticed the shop because I was too busy chuckling at Gabbana. (Maybe the neighbouring business owners could get some sort of compensation.) While the food may be out of this world, it may not be the kind of place for someone with heart problems: casual means "not expected"

and dinning means "stunning with deafening noise." I've toyed with the idea of telling the owners, but awnings ain't cheap, and I might be subject to some very focused dinning. (CN)

Worstest Acronym

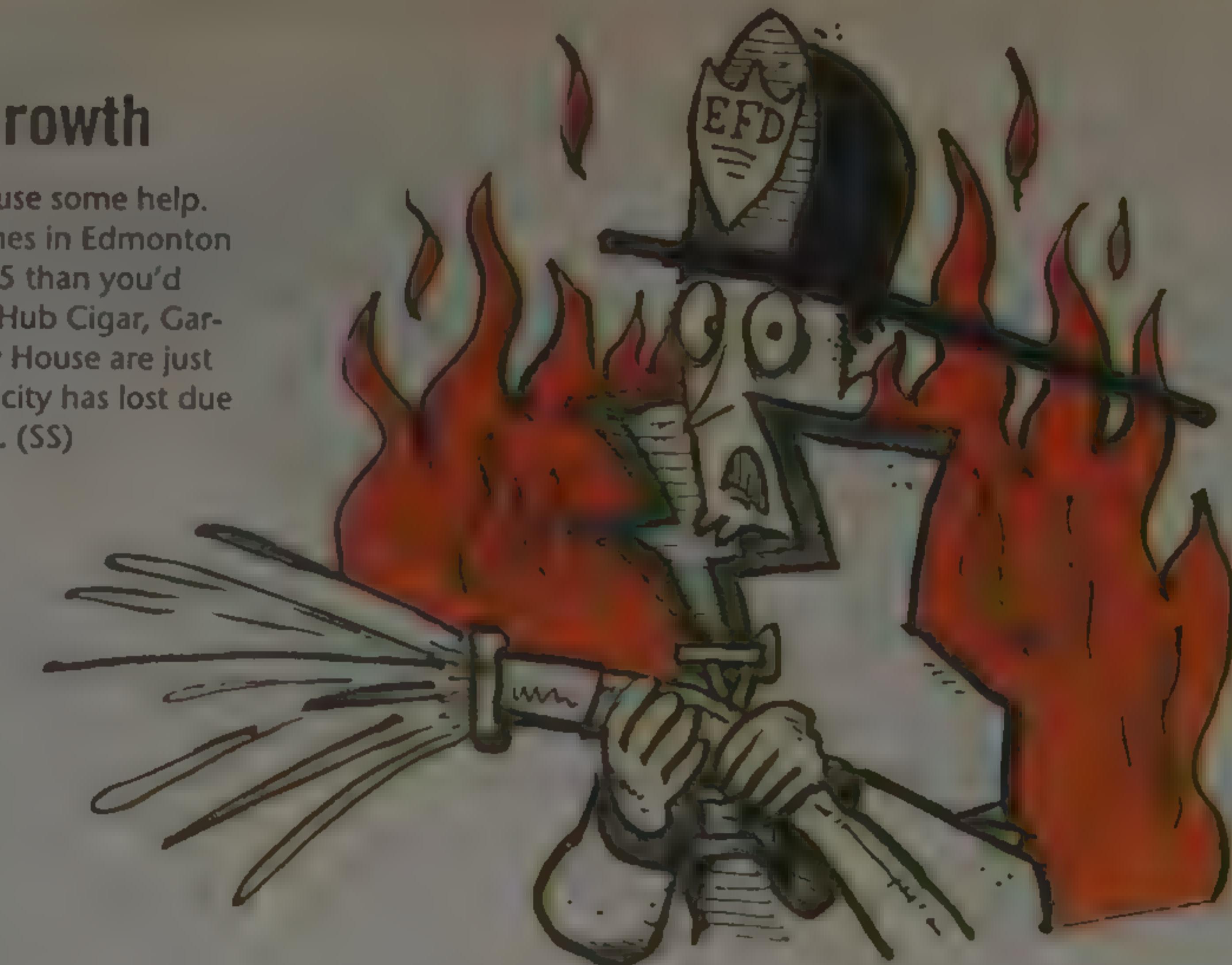
Unsure of how to enjoy Edmonton's extensive and scenic network of multi-use trails? I don't see how you could be, seeing as how the city has posted handy signs everywhere explaining the eight rules to keep in mind as you explore them—with each of those eight rules cleverly corresponding to one of the letters in the word MULTI-USE. Well, maybe "cleverly" is stretching things a bit: the "M" in "MULTIUSE" turns out to stand for... er... "MULTIUSE," as in "Multiuse means shared opportunities for all!" And the "U" stands for... um... "USE," as in "Use your bell." As for the second "U"... well, by this point, the city's team of acronymologists had apparently thrown up their hands in defeat, because that one stands for "USE" as well, as in "Use open trails only." Uninspired! (PM)

Bestest Radio Station

Unless you like shitty music or are the boring kind of pinko, CJRS is the way to go. Fucked-up, idiosyncratic music programming from scores of different minds that come at sound from dozens of angles and present it in ways ranging from totally pro to barely competent, plus real progressive news and

Worstest Job Growth

The firefighters sure could use some help. There have been more flames in Edmonton since the beginning of 2005 than you'd find in hell. The Arlington, Hub Cigar, Garneau Mews and the Pyrogy House are just a few of the landmarks the city has lost due to fires this year. Scary stuff. (SS)



feature programming. It can be hard to take sometimes, but if you don't want to be challenged, don't bother with radio at all—just listen to that mixtape your boyfriend gave you before he moved to Sherbrooke in the summer of Grade 8. Ehhhhh-vree raaaaahhse hazzits thom! (DZ)

Bestest Downtown Panhandlers

The "Do you got a penny?" lady and the starving artist with the coin purse. Their unvarying tactics always put a smile on my otherwise broke face. (CH)

Worstest Crime Against Nature

I moved back to Edmonton from Ottawa about 10 months ago. Since then, I've been living on the southern edge of the city. When I first arrived, the nights were peaceful, lying in bed and listening to the coyotes howling in the darkness. But this spring, bulldozers moved in on a nearby field and new waves of houses have started springing up. I still hear the occasional howl, but they're a lot less common. Okay, it may not be a massive oil spill, but it still highlights the conflict between man and nature. (EM)

Bestest Triumph of Nature

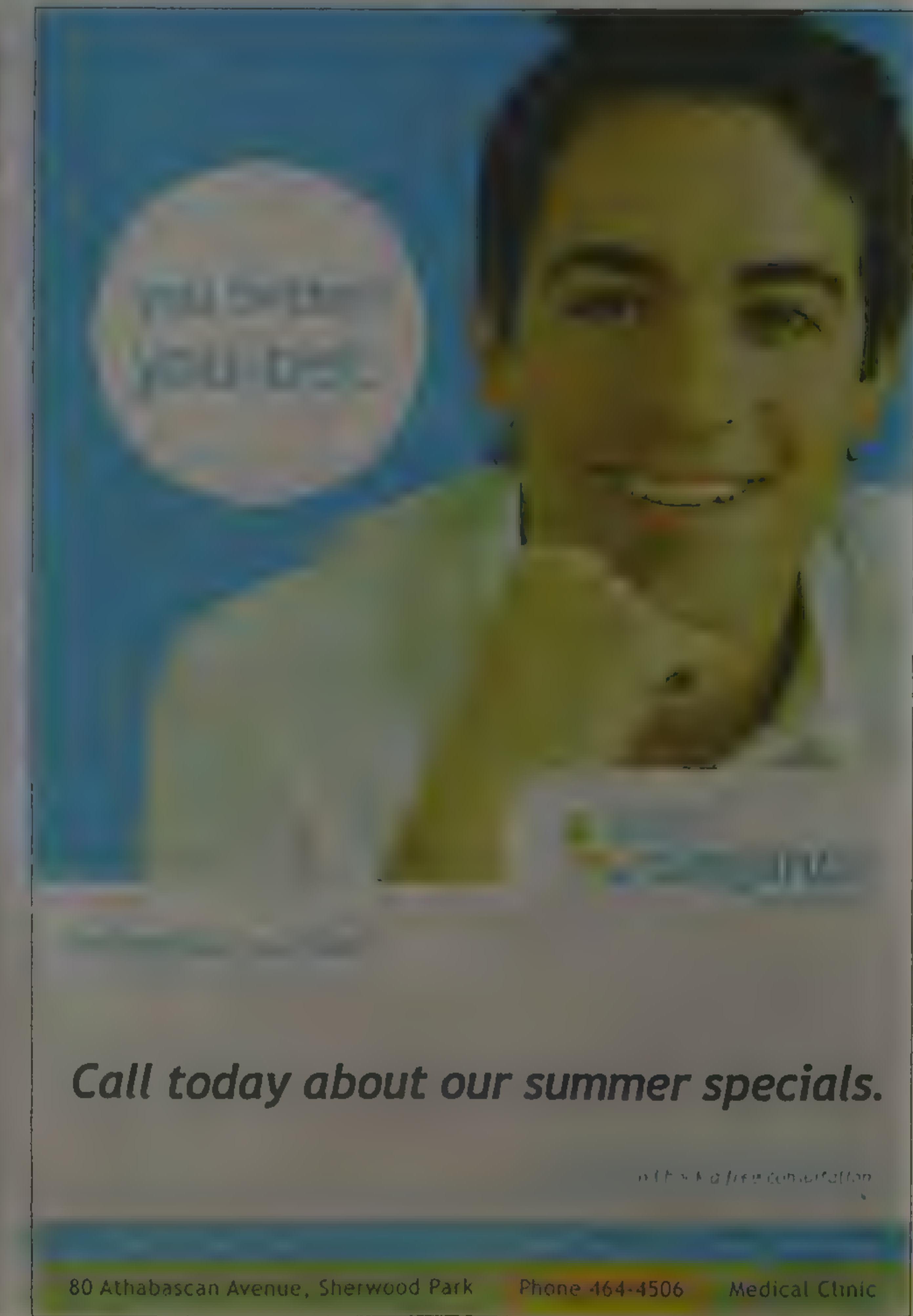
There's a hawk who has found a regular perch on a streetlamp along Calgary Trail next to Ikea. It's up there along the eastern side of the road and I've seen him quite often lately. I know it's only one bird, but I kind of like the fact that he's standing his ground against the rampant commercialism of South Edmonton Common. (EM)

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Bestest Place for Pictures in the Foliage

The most photogenic and easily-accessible foliage in Edmonton lies along 97 Street at Griesbach. Despite an abundance of trees in our city, there aren't many places you can drive right up to for a quick picture. On any non-winter weekend, head south on 97 Street toward 137 Avenue and you'll spot a line of empty cars next to camera-happy crowds. Whether you're seeking spring greenery for a grad photo or a riot of fall colour for toddler pics, the trees of Griesbach will deliver a sensational backdrop. (CT)

Bestest Hair

Peter Hill. I run across Peter Hill almost every week. This minor celebrity and I have some kind of strange karma that keeps on putting us in elevators together, in shops at the same time—heck, once we were both waiting for the bus by the *Journal* building when Terry David Mulligan and Mary Walsh decided to have a chat on the corner. (You must remember that, Peter!) Peter Hill and I are not friends. We have never spoken. But if I were to speak with him, I would certainly ask in a respectful way: "Your hair. How does it do that?" (JA)

Bestest Place to Feel Like a New Yorker Trying to Hail a Taxi

It's downtown after hours, and you just got out of a movie/play/restaurant along with dozens of other like-minded individuals and you're all trying to hail a cab. Finding a lone taxi driving by that's on duty and not headed to Whyte Ave for the big money is often difficult, prompting dangerous waving in the middle of the street, verbal confrontations with others trying to get in the same cab, and cabbies who won't even let your drunken ass in the car until you give him a down payment. Who needs New York when the Gotham spirit is alive and thriving in downtown Edmonton? (CH)

Bestest Spot for Baywatch-Worthy Action

The grassy hillside along Hawrelak Park's eastern road is like a bad action movie unfolding live. The excitement is built upon a number of intertwining elements that all add up to a thrilling plot. First, you need a hot summer day. That ensures that there will be bikini-clad women on rollerblades. This, in turn, results in hordes of rubbernecking young men slowing their

Bestest Place to See Fat Guys With Their Shirts Off

Maybe it's because we associate baseball with summer more than any other sport, or maybe it's warmer in Telus Field than in any other spot in the city. Because a scan of the stands on a warm day will turn up an inordinate number of guys scarfing down hot dogs who have decided to display their man-tits to the world. I don't know how the Cracker-Cats can hit with

merable actors, musicians, academics, writers, athletes and captains of industry, and we're stuck worshipping our contribution to a glorified beauty pageant-cum-brothel. Poor Ron Pederson—the guy is a gifted comic actor garnering rave reviews on a popular American sketch comedy show, but if he wants to get any love from his hometown, it looks like he's going to have to wangle a spot on *The Surreal Life*. (RM)

on and on and on. It's as grating as the "bee-boos" doorbell at 7-11. "Going down" is no better, as the female HAL mocks you like she's taking you down to a place you don't want to go, but suspect you're already there. (CN)

Worstest Newspeople

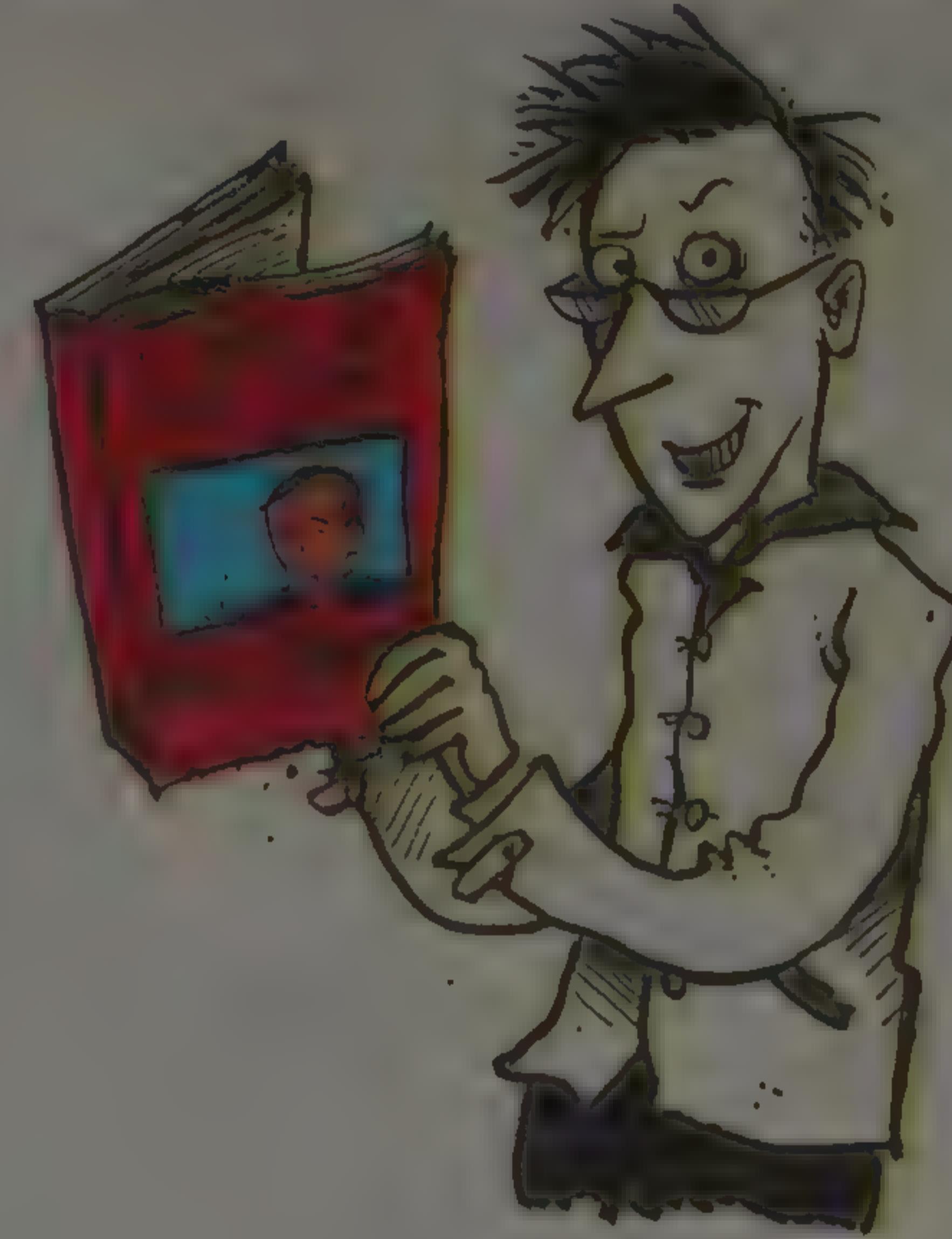
Yes, yes, we know she's the queen. And you want to see her, don't you? That's why you're standing right in front of us, waving your high-tech lensed monstrosity so all we can see is your back, butt and a huge hunk of plastic camera-filter. Earth to the photographers at the museum: all those people behind you, screaming in fury? We were there to see the Her Royal Smallness too. (CA)

Bestest Quote by an Edmontonian

In his state of the city speech, our new mayor Stephen Mandel said, on the subject of beefing up Edmonton's architectural standards, "Our tolerance for crap is zero." I guess it struck me as sort of great that our mayor actually used the word "crap" in a speech, because I've been using his words ever since. "Hey, wanna go to McDonald's?" "I'm sorry, my tolerance for crap is zero." "Wanna see *Bridget Jones 2*?" "Tolerance for crap is zero." "Have you heard the new Backstreet Boys CD?" "Uuuur... Crap. Zero." This will probably get annoying soon, but I think my friends and family are just relieved that I've finally stopped quoting *Anchorman*. (JA)

Bestest Alternative to Chapters/Amazon/Coles, et al.

As geeky as it is to admit in this day and age, I am something of an avid reader. The problem I continually run into, though, is the apparent blindness and general mental defectiveness of every graphic designer working for every publishing house. Seriously—try to buy a new edition of a classic book, and you're stuck with some gaudy, flashy, foil-embossed monstrosity with a price of \$19.95. Who's that money going to, anyway? Joseph Conrad's corpse? So it was with relief that I recently began frequenting Edmonton's plethora of used book stores. Why spend piles of cash propping up an evil multinational corporation (not to mention supporting the pulp and paper industry) when you can wander into one of Edmonton's cozy, cluttered used book stores and find a really cool-looking 30-year-old edition of any classic you like for less than five bucks? All you have to do is dodge the dirty old men poking around the used pornography (and really now, who in their right mind wants "used" pornography?) and you're good to go. (RM)



vehicles to a crawl in hopes of dragging their glimpse out into a full-fledged look. This is where things start getting really exciting, because there's always someone at the back of this lineup who has been cut off from his friends. Given the chance, this person will gun the gas and make a run for it. And that's when the park rangers swoop in, finger pointed authoritatively downwards: the international hand gesture for "Whoa there!" Turn a video camera on this and you've got a new hit series. (EM)

those kinds of distractions. (SS)

Worstest Local Celebrities

My issue isn't necessarily with Edmonton's entrants in *The Bachelorette* per se; rather, I am disgusted with the near-deification these young ladies have received at the hands of Edmonton's media, populace and, most ridiculously, politicians—Premier Klein actually gave an impassioned speech expressing his shock at the girls' dismissal from the program. This is a city that has produced innu-

Worstest Downtown Elevators

If it weren't for the old black-and-whites of Edmonton on the walls, the elevators at First Edmonton Place would be completely unbearable. Because they are so slow, there is always a full car waiting to load up on the ground floor. Woe to anyone who needs to reach anywhere the top. A female HAL 9000 has to announce every floor before saying "Going up" in that coy way of hers. All the way up it's "second floor, going up; third floor, going up; fourth floor, going up," and

SEE PAGE 29



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Worlest Weather Trend

Forget groundhogs or Accu-Weather forecasts. Even though Alberta weather is as unpredictable as Courtney Love's mood swings, there is one Edmonton certainty: when the Folk Fest begins, the heavens will open up, turning the hill into one heck of a slippy-slidy mud bog. (SS)

Bestest Patio Weather

We all know what it's like living in Edmonton: one minute the weather is seriously fine and the next we're running for shelter before the rain washes us away. So it's only natural that we want to get in as much outdoor time as possible before the next Ice Age hits. On one of those days when the temperature would be just right if it weren't for that blasted chill wind, my dad was determined that we would eat our barbecued dinners in the backyard. Certain that he could hold back the wind, thereby creating an oasis of warmth, he set about tying a couple of large rain tarps around the deck railings to block out the cold. The experiment was unsuccessful, but I was struck by the sight as I looked up and down the block. Huddled outside several of the neighbouring houses were other groups of barbecuers, some of them wearing thick jackets with shorts. It seems that my dad wasn't the only one willing to fight the elements in an attempt to wring a summer experience out of the city's temperamental weather. (EM)

Worlest Job

Come rain, snow or mocking teenagers, the sight of this plucky woman in her clown suit fills me with schadenfreude. However, my malicious amusement at her efforts is tempered by admiration. She knows that someone has to tempt rush hour traffic into stopping for flowers on their way down 149 Street. If she doesn't do it, who will? So she cavorts and gamely waves her sign at the motorists who universally ignore her. As I drive by and wave, I wonder if she's the crying-on-the-inside kind of clown. (CT)

Bestest Obscure Fact

Learned From an RV Mechanic

Recently, I was over at my friend Terry's house. Now, Terry is an RV mechanic, so I tend to trust him when he tells me some fact about a hotel on wheels. However, on this particular evening, he said something that left me and our wives laughing hysterically. According to Terry, RVs are not built on assembly lines like cars. No, the majority of them are put together by hand in Indiana... by the Amish. Yeah, right. What do you take me for? Some kind of gullible monkey? But when I got home that night, something was nagging at me. A few minutes of searching on the internet and I learned that one should never, ever disregard the word of someone who makes a living fixing RVs. He was indeed correct: half of the world's RVs are built in Elkhart County, Indiana by

Amish factory workers. Who'd have figured that? (EM)

Bestest Toboggan Hill

If There Weren't Any Traffic

My 105 Street fantasy always begins on a cold, crisp winter morning. My breath plumes out behind me as I kick off and peek up over the curved prow of my toboggan. There is nothing to slow my descent and I pick up speed over the snowy cement. Time stretches out and I scream with joyous terror as I approach the 98 Avenue intersection face-first, hoping I timed the lights right and won't end up under a bus. I gradually bleed off speed and adrenaline as I coast to a stop on the gentle upslope leading into the Legislature grounds. I turn around, take the toboggan cord in my hand and begin trudging up the hill again for another mind-numbing journey of panic and ecstasy. (CT)

Bestest Sight at the End of a Long Drive Home

"City of Champions." Live it. Love it. Don't change the damn motto. It rings with the poignant naivete of a time when our sports teams won and the world was our smorgasbord. Believe it or not, it's still true. Well, maybe not about the sports teams, but nobody I've ever met based their community pride exclusively on hired athletes. (CT) v



Bestest Pet Cemetery

I never knew Sid, but there was nary a day, walking to school across the bridge on Saskatchewan Drive, that I didn't think of the little fella. You see, under the bridge, looking down towards the river valley, lies Sid's simple memorial, a wooden cross, painted red with a black, curly motif, with the epitaph "Slither on, Sid." And slither on I'm sure he does, like the creepy angel-snake he is, frolicking in his heavenly terrarium, happily gobbling wee winged gerbils and coiling lazily among the clouds. (LC)

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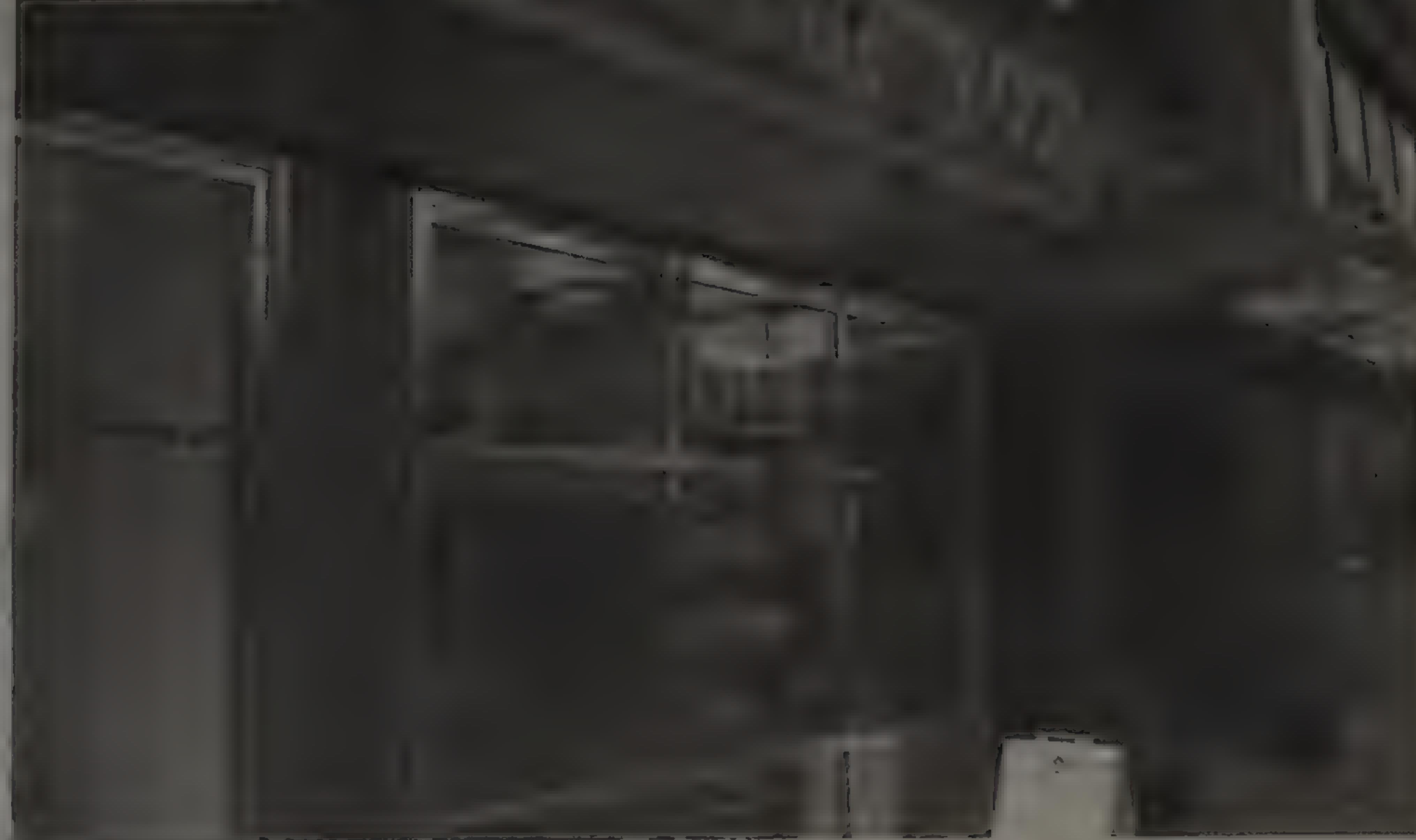
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Mad hot Tea Room

Savouring smoke-free Stroganoff (and psychics!) at the Russian Tea Room

BY CHRISTOPHER THRALL

In the first half-hour since opening their doors under the new non-smoking bylaw, **The Russian Tea Room** had yet to see a riot. Despite there being three or four occupied tables and a trio of psychics in the far corner, not a single nicotine-deprived rage was to be found, and any lingering odour was absent. Our group was excited about dining in a longtime Edmon-

ton favourite without the Marlboro Man exhaling directly into our faces; our hostess was surprised to see our 14-month-old daughter, but welcomed the Tea Room's first under-18 patron in years.

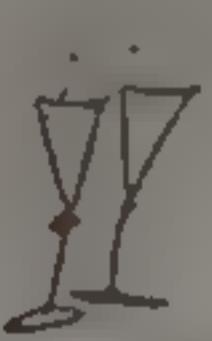
We sat near the full-length windows that looked out on Jasper Avenue and watched the patriotically-attired July 1 foot traffic. The

direct sunlight was warm, so the ladies ordered iced tea (\$1.50) and I requested a grapefruit juice (\$2). We savoured our cool drinks while browsing the menu, which featured an odd assortment for a place that purported to specialize in Russian

delights. I supposed that business necessity replaced *seledka pod shuboy* or caviar with nachos and oriental chicken salad. Nonetheless, essentials like borscht and goulash were available and the menu really shone in the entrées.

UPON ARRIVAL, I had intended to order a light lunch of borscht (\$3.95) and bagel to save plenty of room for the delectable desserts on display in their refrigerated case. However, the siren song of an authentic Beef Stroganoff (\$12.95) lured me from my calorie-wise intentions. Our guest backed me by choosing the exquisitely described Chicken Tel Aviv (\$13.95) while my wife ordered the enigmatic Fettuccine Moscow (\$9.95), which was listed without a

PREVIEW RUSSIAN

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While awaiting our lunch, we chatted about the resident psychics. Tales of seers stirring the metaphysical ether in the back of this restaurant has always intrigued me. The rampant tchotchkies and influences of curios might interfere with voices from beyond, but I was willing to give it a try. I sat down in the middle of three tables and discussed my extrasensory options with Lesley. I agreed to palmistry and a tarot card reading for \$30, then leapt at the chance to tape the session for an extra \$3.

Lesley quickly looked up the planetary alignments on my birth chart and gave me the generally accurate description of my personality that astrology provides. I slowly shuffled a deck of handmade Tarot cards. She asked me to keep a question in mind and then looked at my hands. Holding my hands under the table's lamp, she described my education, my incredibly high intelligence and revealed how many children I will have. In the Tarot cards, she discovered that not only will great success fall into my lap next spring, but I will also move into a new house and have another baby much sooner than expected. Lesley didn't explain how the individual cards related to each piece of information, but rather drew conclusions from the entire spread.

The kitchen must have been watching our readings because our meals arrived as we returned. Served on beautiful china, the dishes trailed clouds of mouth-watering aromas.

My Stroganoff was a delight: a mound of white rice supported generous amounts of thick, tender pieces of beef in a dark stew. Paprika dusted the vegetables on both my plate and that of our guest. Her moist chicken breast rested beneath



a thin slice of smoked salmon and combined wonderfully with the rich cream sauce. Her stuffed potato, however, looked mass-produced and was a bit dry.

The final dish to arrive, my wife's pasta, was outstanding. A large portion of fettuccine noodles covered her entire plate and swam in a dark tomato sauce. The whole was

crowned with mushrooms, prawns and melted cheese. The sauce had a subtle, indefinable sweetness that simply rocked our taste buds. As hard as my wife and I tried, we were overcome by the dinner-sized portions and boxed up about a quarter of our entrées. Our guest, taught as a child to clean her plate, put the menu's largest meal into her tiny frame. I still have no idea how she did it.

SINCE I AM both masochistic and greedy, I decided on a slice of the chocolate mousse cake (\$4.95) for dessert and grudgingly offered to share it. The enormous slice of cake could have been fresher, but the light and creamy mousse combined with a thick layer of chocolate shavings to leave a mocha serenade on the tongue.

Including tax, tip and two divinations, lunch came in at about \$110 for the three of us. It was more expensive than I expected, but I can't think of another Canada Day brunch that includes an evaluation of your life and advice for your future—besides brunch with family, of course, but this one was both less critical and easier to walk away from afterwards. The best part is, we tasted our food and didn't walk out reeking of cigarette smoke.

By the way, if anyone would like to drop tremendous success in my lap this spring, please contact me through my editor, Chris, at *Vue Weekly*. ☺

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DOWNTOWN JAZZ

july 7
stuart crosley
july 8 & 9
don bradshaw's big idea



Should I satay or should I go?

The Malay's the thing in the boisterous atmosphere of Tropika Cuisine

BY IAIN ILICH

Even though we showed up at around 7 p.m. on a Thursday evening, the main dining area inside Tropika Malaysian Cuisine was packed to the rafters, with large groups of people sitting around giant circular tables, and a few small families and couples scattered throughout the nicer-than-average family-restaurant interior. While the atmosphere would have been perfect for a boisterous dinner out with a large group of

friends, the noise level was a bit too high for a quiet, romantic night out with my sweetie. The isolated party rooms at the back of the restaurant helped to dampen the drunken birthday roars, though a number of dodgy looking teens dressed like Shaw Desman kept weaving around the tables in the main restaurant area for God only knows what reason. It was a fairly mixed clientele, to say the least.

The menu at Tropika is absolutely



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with dozens of different main course dishes, many of them illustrated with gorgeous photos right on the menu. While the pictures helped to wake up our minds on a few occasions, we'd brought along a list of recommendations that my brother (who loves Tropika) insisted that we follow. On his advice, we ordered a couple of the Roti Canai (\$3.25 each), a fried Malay bread served with a curry sauce, which sounded pretty good. My brother had also recommended the Lemon Chicken (\$9.95), which, as it is elsewhere, is a piece of battered chicken, cut into strips and served under a clear, thick sweet-and-sour lemon sauce. My wife, captivated by one of the photos on the menu, ordered the Assam Ayam (\$10.95), a dish composed of medium-sized pieces of chicken marinated in "Assam juice," lemongrass juice, star anise, tamarind and chili extract. None of the dishes came with rice, so we ordered a couple of sides: one obligatory bowl of white rice (\$1), and one bowl of Chow Ginger Rice (\$1.50), which added a bit more adventurous. To drink, we each picked a lightish Asian beer: a bottle of China's ubiquitous Tsingtao (\$4.50) for me and a bottle of Sapporo (also \$4.50), straight from Japan, for my wife.

To start things off, we figured we'd take advantage of Tropika's fantastic all-price satay special (offered from Monday through Thursday every week, according to the sign on the front door), ordering a total of 12 skewers (six chicken, six beef) to split between the two of us. The lot came dressed with a peanut sauce, and cost us a mere 75 cents per stick instead of the usual \$1.50. The meat was perfectly cooked (with a nice grilled taste), well cut (no obvious chunks of gristle left) and of a far greater quantity than we expected, especially for the price. The peanut sauce, while quite good, was a bit lacking in the heat department and was obviously tailored for folks who aren't used to spicy food. I managed to make it through a good portion of more than half of the satay skewers before the rest of our meal arrived.

WE WERE INSTANTLY STRUCK by the quantity of food that was deposited at our table, which was *much* more than the photos on the menu suggested. My wife's Assam Ayam chicken wasn't just a few small pieces of chicken, coating in sauce as per the menu photo, but rather a small mountain of meat piled high above the sauce. The Chow Ginger Rice was fantastic, and went well with both of our main dishes as well as the remaining satay and peanut sauce. The Roti Canai was a regular treat; it had a lightly sweet taste to it, kind of a cross between a

sweet pastry and a green onion cake (without the green onions, mind you). The only semi-disappointment was the lemon chicken, which was way too oily, even by lemon chicken standards. We managed to finish a little more than half of our food before we asked for the rest to be wrapped up.

Throughout our meal, my wife and I both had our eyes on the standing triangular card in the middle of the table, which advertised a selection of gelato-based treats. Even though we were quite full, we couldn't resist. My

wife picked the gelato pear (\$4.95), a pear-shaped lump of hazelnut gelato that was described as being dipped in Belgian chocolate and covered in tortone pieces, followed by the clincher:

MALAYSIAN

"Enough to make grown men weep." We liked the sound of that. Since the chocolate pear was already spoken for, I chose the amaretto gelato ball (\$4.75), a baseball-sized sphere of

amaretto ice cream, sprinkled in amaretto cookies, with a centre made of some sort of gooey cherry-flavoured substance. Both were good, though my wife's pear was very, very hard—so hard, in fact, that it was slipped and slid around the stylish-looking plate while my wife attempted to break off a bite with her spoon. Not easy, but worth the effort. (Hint: Don't try to cut an ice cube with a spoon. Smack the chocolate surface to break the shell, then dig in. I think that's what otters do....)

By the time we finished our meal, the place had settled down a bit, though the group of little Shawn Desmans in the party room only seemed to be getting more rowdy. Lemon chicken aside, the food was excellent and the satay special helped keep the price below \$60 before tax. That's a pretty decent value, all things considered. Now if only they'd spice things up a bit.... ☺

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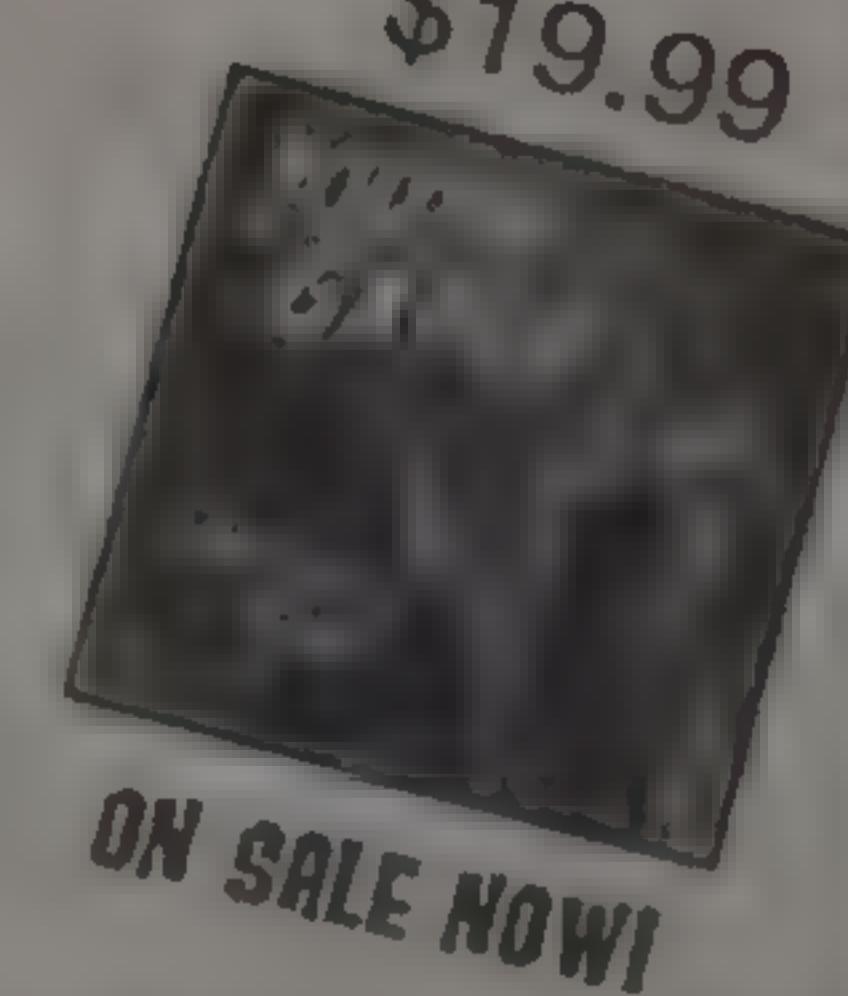
Your Music Destination

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 7, 2005

1. System Of A Down - Mezmerize (American)
2. John Prine - Fair & Square (oh boy)
3. Whitley Houston - Whitley Houston (rectangle)
4. Gorillaz - Demon Days (parlophone)
5. Martha Wainwright - Martha Wainwright (maple)
6. Lucinda Williams - Live @ The Fillmore (lost highway)
7. The White Stripes - Get Behind Me Satan (V2)
8. Nine Inch Nails - With Teeth (interscope)
9. Joni Mitchell - Songs Of A Prairie Girl (nonesuch)
10. Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings - Naturally (dapton)
11. Mary Gauthier - Mercy Now (lost highway)
12. As I Lay Dying - Shadows Are Security (metal blade)
13. Spoon - Gimmie Fiction (merge)
14. The Floor - Personnel (six shooter)
15. John Hiatt - Masters Of Disaster (new west)
16. Chip Taylor & Came Rodriguez - Red Dog Tracks (train wreck)
17. Foo Fighters - In Your Honor (rca)
18. Architecture In Helsinki - In Case We Die (bar none)
19. Daniel Lanois - Belladonna (anti)
20. Coldplay - X&Y (emi)
21. Arcade Fire - Funeral (merge)
22. Ryan Adams - Cold Roses (lost highway)
23. Sleater-Kinney - The Woods (sub pop)
24. Jack Johnson - In Between Dreams (brushfire)
25. Carolyn Mark - Just Married: An Album Of Duets (mint)
26. Stutterfly - And We Are Bleed Of Color (maverick)
27. Funeral For A Friend - Hours (atlantic)
28. Van Morrison - Magic Time (exile)
29. Connie Kaldor - Sky With Nothing To Get In The Way (coyote)
30. Sonny Landreth - Grant Street (sugar hill)

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MUSIC

Life of Brian

Brian Jonestown Massacre frontman lives up to infamous, media-hating reputation in *Vue* interview

BY ROSS MOROZ

As a music writer, I'm sometimes disillusioned by how desperate many bands are for positive press. Independent acts' hunger for exposure is understandable, sure, but too often this hankering for attention causes musicians to cynically embark on crass marketing campaigns, sucking up to journalists and hiding behind a façade of false modesty. That's why it was actually sort of refreshing to be called a "fucking boob," among other things, by Anton Newcombe, the cantankerous and combative frontman of infamous San Francisco psychedelic rockers Brian Jonestown Massacre.

"What do you know about my work?" he asks rhetorically, expressing more than a little disappointment at my apparent deficiencies as an interviewer. "You need to go to night school, my friend—I swear I will get you fired for these questions."

Even though Newcombe's attacks are undeniably damning, my ego remains relatively unscathed: Newcombe, it bears mentioning, isn't exactly known for his gracious manner. Having fronted the Brian Jonestown Massacre for the better part of 15 years, Newcombe and his revolving cast of bandmates (the Massacre has had more than 40 members, and Newcombe remains the only original member of the group) spent most of their careers toiling away in relative obscurity, earning a dedicated cult following but remaining largely overlooked by the mainstream music-buying public.

All this changed with the 2004

rockumentary *Dig!*, which documented the comings and goings of fellow San Franciscans the Dandy Warhols. Warhols bandleader Courtney Taylor was the star of the film, but Newcombe stole the show, fist-fighting with bandmates, getting arrested, trashing hotel rooms and, most disconcertingly, presenting his friends in the Warhols with a somewhat abstract gift: shotgun shells with their names written on them.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, Newcombe is less than thrilled with the way he is represented in *Dig!*; in a statement posted on his website, Newcombe condemns the film as "exploitative" and "Jerry Springer-esque," dismissing *Dig!* as "a series of punch-ups and

REVUE ROCK

mishaps taken out of context" and accusing director Ondi Timoner of propagating "bold-faced lies." Newcombe's criticisms aside, *Dig!* has garnered rave reviews, winning the Grand Jury Prize for best documentary at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, and the recent upswing in the public's interest in the Brian Jonestown Massacre is undeniably attributable to the film's success, although Newcombe doesn't exactly agree with this assessment.

"It's a movie, you fucking cunt," he argues, offering no further elaboration. The only question he's willing to entertain about the events depicted in *Dig!* regards his relationship with Taylor, who, at least at the beginning of the film, is presented as an extremely close friend of Newcombe's.

"Yes, we are [still friends], but more importantly our friends are friends," he insists, adding even more cryptically, "There is an old saying: you can leave the house, but you can't get off the block. Think about it—you would know this if you could read."

It's becoming pretty obvious at this point that Newcombe is no fan of music journalists. "I am under the

impression that true journalism is dead and that people such as yourself are a total waste of time," he confirms, elaborating charmingly, "You are a wage slave. Think about it: you should just my shit for a living. Really—I'll give you \$10,000 a month to eat a plate of my shit. Ten thousand fucking dollars... what do you say?"

I politely decline. "I thought Shame on you."

TO BE FAIR, Newcombe's dislike of the press is not entirely without basis. Since the release of *Dig!*, coverage (including, I suppose, this piece) has focused far more on Newcombe's infamy than his band's musical merits. His aversion to reporters as a reason for his unwillingness to actually speak to the media (this interview was conducted via e-mail) is a policy he instituted after a particularly damning piece appeared in Britain's the *Guardian*, which somehow managed to present Newcombe as combative, profane and drunk.

"[The *Guardian* reporter] will pain in the ass, and had less knowledge of our band than you do," he explains, although at this point Newcombe, almost disappointingly, begins to soften his stance. "Actually, I kind of like you," he admits. "It seems you just got caught in the line of fire."

Newcombe is also remarkably gracious when he discusses his excitement about getting the opportunity to play a show in a small Canadian city like Edmonton. "I love Canada and I love the history of its forward-thinking people," he says, practically gushing. "I can't wait to be able to visit with all of my friends."

So, um, maybe he'd be interested in having a drink with a, ah, fucking boob?

"I'm interested," he replies, specifying "ambrosia—that's what I drink," and adding, "No hard feelings, hey?"

BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE
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But everyone sort of expects that all bands have a little bit of Joy Division in them these days."

In fact, Worang reports his band is lured by a more contemporary comparison—ironically, to a band often accused of following in the footsteps of Joy Division themselves. "When we were first writing songs someone mentioned this band Interpol," he says. "I happened to be in New York that year, so I bought their EP and thought, 'Wow, these guys sound like us.'"

Worang isn't all that troubled if people want to draw that parallel—in fact, upon reading a review of Uncut's recent album hailing it as "the record Interpol should have made," Worang was mildly upset, but only because he "thought [Interpol's latest release] *Antics* was actually a great album." Besides, Worang considers any discussions about who sounds like whom or what influenced what to be largely academic and entirely irrelevant to the vast majority of listeners. "I don't think the majority of people have really developed, informed opinions about this stuff," he says. "Kids just go to shows and enjoy themselves and that's about it. Most people who go to shows aren't huge music nerds like you and me." (RM)

Who's a pretty birdie?

Cockatoo • With Brian Jonestown Massacre • New City • Wed, July 13 After a decade spent plying her trade in Toronto, local songstress Robyn Bright returned home last year and

began playing her haunting, emotional music with drummer Shauna Hosegood. She soon came to the attention of bassist David Gawdunyk, and the two realized they shared a passion for '80s alternative music. "Every influence was the same," says Gawdunyk. In April they were sharing a pint in the crowded confines of the Black Dog and deciding to form a band. "Oddly enough," Gawdunyk says, "there was a Cure CD on the table and we flipped it over and we saw the word 'cockatoo' and that became the name. We started writing songs pretty much the next day."

Although Cockatoo have only played a couple of gigs so far, they've obviously impressed some of the right people, landing a coveted spot opening for

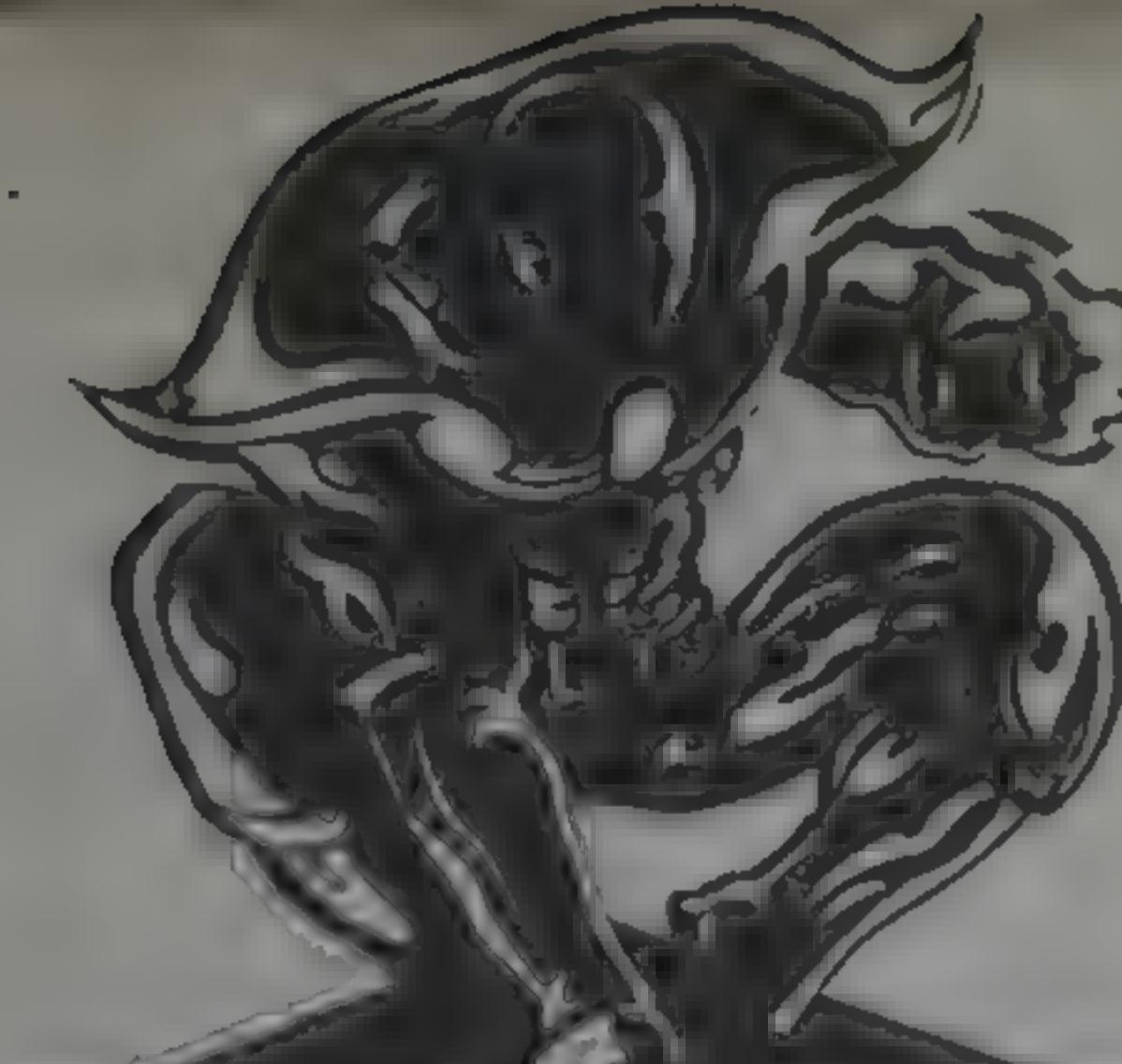
Brian Jonestown Massacre next week. They've also headed into the studio with the Floor's Graham Lessard to make a document of what they've come up with so far. "We have gobs of songs that we have to narrow down and decide what we want to keep as an album," Gawdunyk says.

While Cockatoo were brought together by similar influences, what really holds their songs together is a dedication to a central theme—the



Calgary's Five Star Affair, who played Red's on July 5 for the Molson Rock Search

power and fury of love. "Not in a cheesy, candlelit dinner kind of way," Gawdunyk says, "but hope and the possibilities of love and stuff like that. We're not in our teens or early 20s, so there's a lot of experience kicking around. Having been around the block once or twice and having your heart broken two or three times, I think we're bringing some definite themes that we feel comfortable talking about and looking on the bright side of." (PD)



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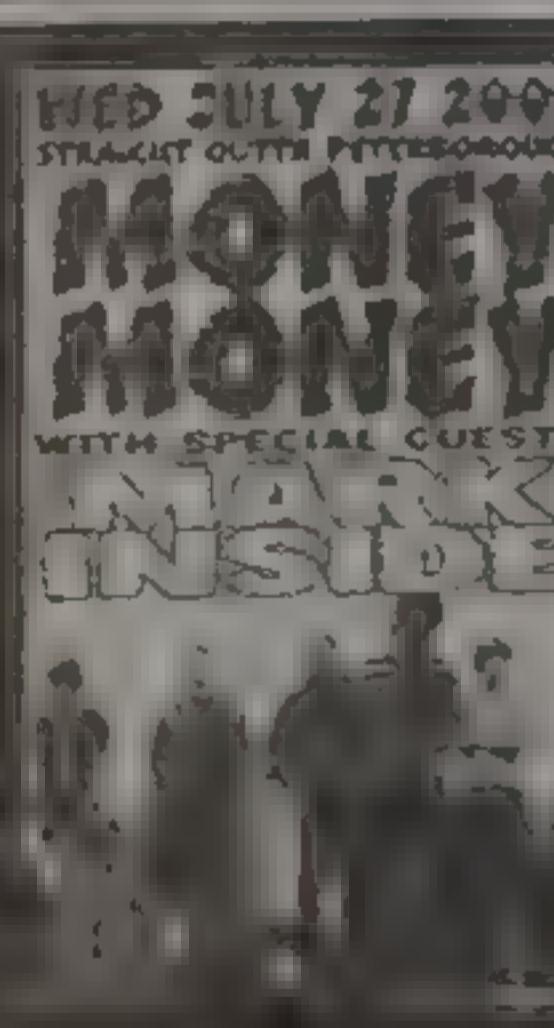
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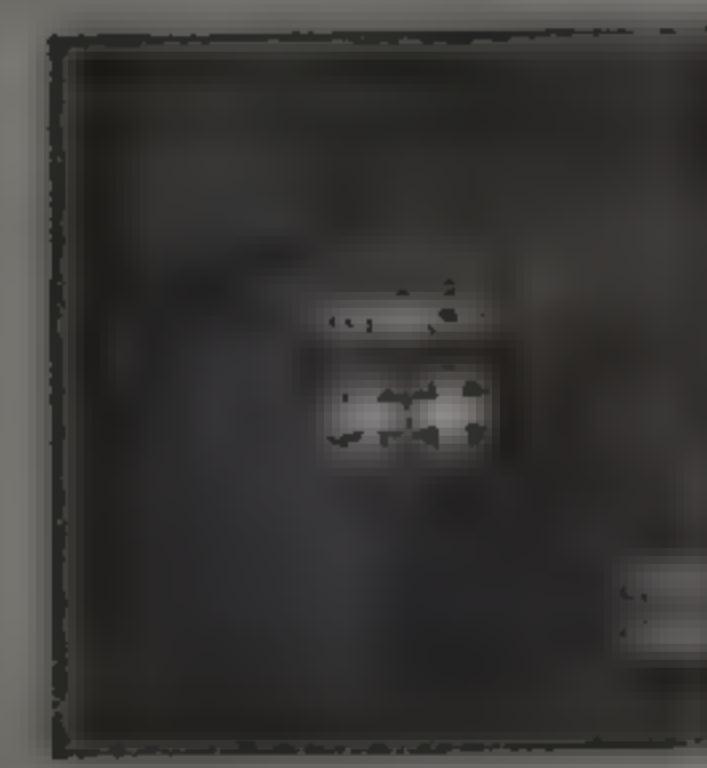
July 14th, Race City Speedway, Calgary



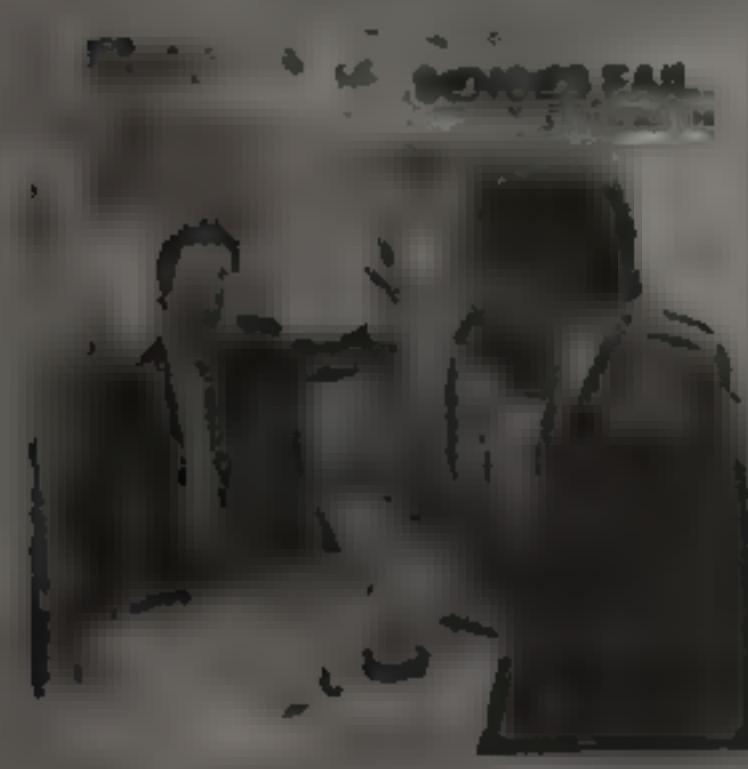
The Starting Line



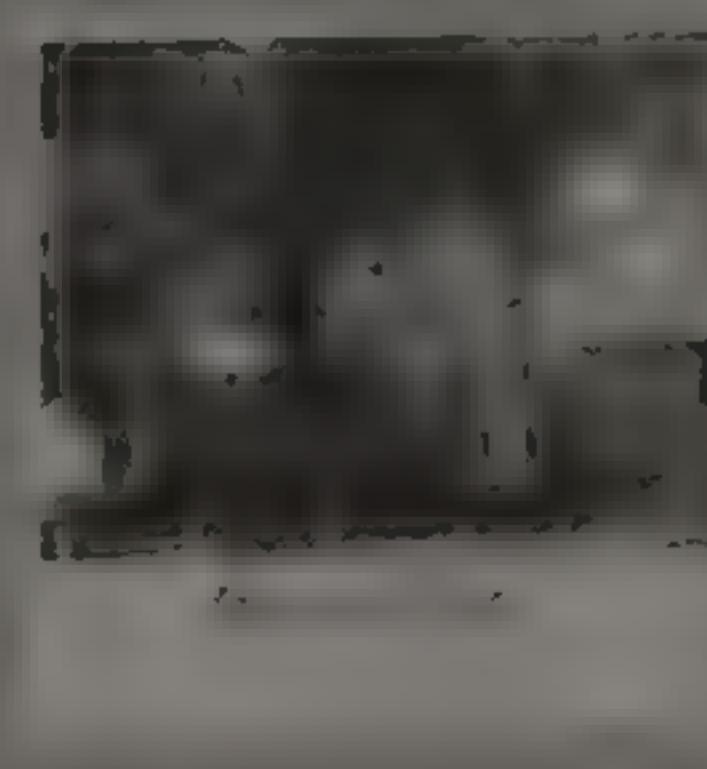
Fall Out Boy



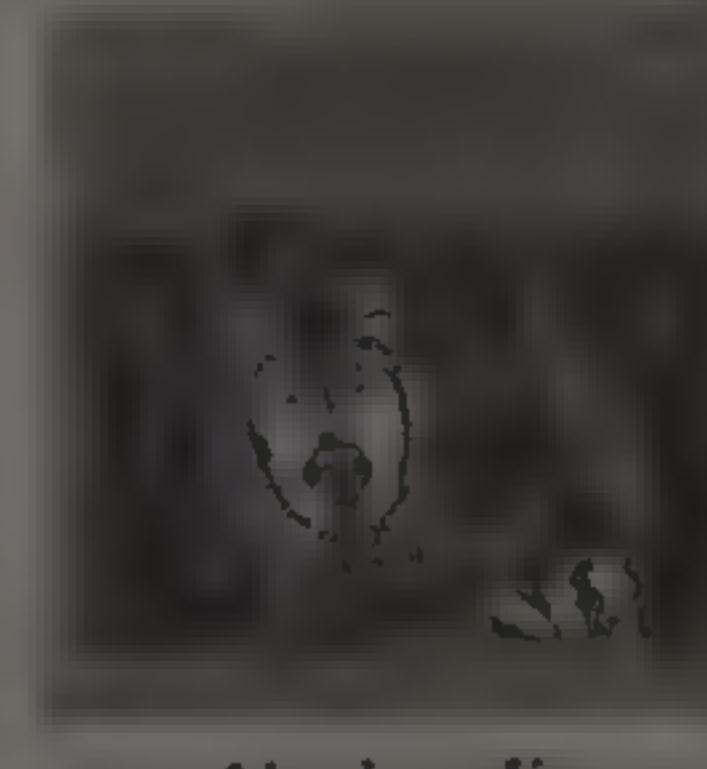
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DOWNSTAIRS: DJ Jazzy; \$4

(member)/\$6 (non-member)

RUM JUNGLE Peoples DJ

Spinning

SAPHIRE RESTAURANT

AND LOUNGE Deep House:
with Friday resident DJ Luke

Morrison

SAVORY DJ Busy B; no cover

SPORTSWORLD INLINE

AND ROLLER DISCO Top 40

request, mix of retro and

disco; 7pm-12am

STANDARD All New Q107

Fridays: hosted by Harman B

and DJ Kwake, live to air

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40

with DJ Tysin

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS

House/breaks/garage w/

Smoov, Dane, T-Bass, Rezidnt

Funk, Vinny Vo, Dusty

Grooves, Sweetz 1am - 8am

WUNDERBAR Sergio

Georgini's Friday Wind Down:

With DJ Calibar

Y AFTERHOURS Release

funky/sexy/hard house w/

Luke Morrison, Erin Eden,

Donovan, Darcy Klein, Bryan

Doyle; 1am - 8am

SAT
LIVE MUSIC

ALLIED ITALIAN KITCHEN
Terry Jorden; 7-10pm

ATLANTIC TRAP & GILL Duff
Robison

BACKSTAGE TAP & GRILL
The Backstage First Birthday
Party; Outside The Wall (Pink
Floyd Tribute Band)

BLACK DOG Pernell Reichert
and the Hard Drinkers; no
cover; 4-6pm

CASINO (EDMONTON)
Silverhawk (pop/country)

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
K-Tels (50s)

DRUID (JASPER AVENUE) The
Shufflehound with "Uptown"
Freddy Brown (blues/roots);
4-7pm

FOUR ROOMS Don
Bradshaw's Big Idea

J.J.'S PUB Sallys Krackers
(rock)

JEKYLL & HYDE Headwind

('60s/'70s); no cover; 9pm

NEWCASTLE PUB F'n it
(rock/top 40)

RED STRAP MARKET Open
Stage and Expressive Arts

Experience hosted by Mary

Rankin 1pm - 4pm

RED'S STARSHIP featuring
Mickey Thomas, guests; 7pm

SHARKTANK Dietzche V &
the Abominable Snowman,
Cadence Weapon, Junior
Bloomsday; all ages

SIDETRACK CAFE No Hands
CD release party; The Last
Deal CD release party; w/ The
Neins Circa

THE TAPHOUSE Devonder

with Cooper's Cobra; 9:30pm

URBAN LOUNGE Ozzy

Ozmunds

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE DJ
Escapade Entertainment

BOOTS Flashback Saturdays:
retro dance, house with
Derrick

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB DJ
Arrowchaser

DECADANCE Static: house
with LP and Tomek.

ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE

Urban Metropolis

GAS PUMP Top 40/dance
with DJ Christian

GUILTY MARTINI Supreme
Saturdays: urban with
Invincible, Big Sun, DJ

Game; 9pm (door); no
minors

HALO Those Who Know:
house with DJ Jr. Brown,
Winston Roberts, Remo; no
cover

ROSEBOWL Jam with the

IRON HORSE Urban dance
party

NEW CITY LIKWID
LOUNGE Ass Shakin' Funk
with Cool Cut and guests

NEW CITY SUBURBS
Punk/alt/pop/dance with Blue
Jay and Nikrofelya

ONE ON WHYTE Music 4
The Masses: retro, top 40
R&B with DJ Crownroyal

OVERTIME BOILER AND
TAPROOM SOUTH New:
classic rock, R&B, urban
and dance with DJ Mikee;

9pm-2am; no cover

RED STAR Indie rock, hip
hop, rock, Brit pop with S
Master F

THE ROOST Upstairs:
Monthly theme parties, new
music with DJ Jazzy

Downstairs: Retro music
with DJ Dan and Mike; \$4
(member)/\$6 (non-member)

RUM JUNGLE Rum Jungle
legendary Saturdays: hip hop
old school and R&B

SAPHIRE RESTAURANT
AND LOUNGE Unique house
beats with Saturday resident
DJ Tripswitch

SECRETS DJ Saturday with DJ
(Naughty)

SPORTSWORLD INLINE
AND ROLLER DISCO Top 40
request, mix of retro and
disco; 7pm-12am

STANDARD Live to Air 96X

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40
with DJ Tysin

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS
Hard house/trance/funky w/
Jeff Hillis, DTDR, Big Daddy,
STX, Gryffin; 1am - 9am

VICTORY LOUNGE USA
UK/Hiphop vs. House: w/
DJ Jason LP; 8pm

WUNDERBAR Soundcheck
Saturdays: With DJ Shumba
and guest

Y AFTERHOURS Release
funky/sexy/hard house w/
Luke Morrison, Erin Eden,
Donovan, Darcy Klein, Bryan
Doyle; 1am - 8am

SUN
LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
ReClaim Sundays: Funky jazz
hosted by Rubin Metha,
Lane Arendt and guests; no
cover

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL
Carmen's Sunday live

BLUE CHAIR Stringbean
Quartette; donations

CARGO AND JAMES TEA
SHOPPE Open stage with
Bob Robichaud; 7-10pm

O'BRYNE'S Joe Bird's Ine jam
9:30pm

ROSEBOWL Jam with the

SHARK TANK Bombs Over
Burn the 8 Track,
Sound Tragedy, Eyes Full
and more, 7pm, \$7
\$8 non-members

SIDETRACK CAFE Granny
milk

DJS

BACKSTAGE TAP AND
GRILL Industry Night, with
W.C. & J, Improve, Jameoki and
H.M.

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Sexy
Sundays: all night and all
request dance party with DJ
Eddy Toonflash

CALENTE Urban Ladies
Night Sundays: 91.7, The
Cafe, DJ Invincible;
Game, Weapon X; 10pm; no
minors

DECADANCE Worship w/ Big
Daddy, DTDR & guests;
10pm - close

THE GRINDER Soul Sundays:
with Rocko

NEW CITY LIBRARY
LOUNGE Bust A Nut: with
Mo and Cool Curt

ONE ON WHYTE Sunday
Hospitality House Party: with
Crownroyal

THE ROOST Hangover Clinic
Beer Bash: with DJ
Eazy; \$2

RUM JUNGLE Service
Industry Night

SAVOY French pop mixed
with Deja Dj

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE House
Arrest Sundays: With Johnny
Dangerous, Andy Inertia

VICTORY LOUNGE Self Help
Sundays: punk rock, hip hop
with DJ Slipped Disc

WUNDERBAR A Whole Lot
of Shakin' Sundays: rockabilly,
psychobilly

MON
LIVE MUSIC

HONEST MUR'S BAR AND
GRILL Open stage/jam every
Monday hosted by the Retro
Rockets Band; 8pm-midnight

L.B.'S PUB House band;
9:30pm-1am; no cover

RED'S Molson Canadian Rock
Search; 8pm

SIDETRACK CAFE Open
stage Mondays, hosted by
Ben Spencer; 9pm; no cover

TAPHOUSE Monday Live:
with Big Tickle; 8:30-
11:30pm; no cover

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE DJ
Pennytintary

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
Ashley Love and DJ Alvaro

FILTHY McNASTY'S Twisted
Mondays: with DJ S.W.A.G.

NEW CITY LIBRARY
LOUNGE DJ Dusty Grooves

O'BRYNE'S Hip Mondays:
industry night with DJ
Finnegan, live music

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE Manic
Monday: old skool R&B, hip
hop with Harman B and DJ
Kwake

VICTORY LOUNGE
Mondays: be your own DJ,
bring your iPod

WUNDERBAR
Torkelsons Armada: Rock and
Roll with Herman
Menderchuck

TUE
LIVE MUSIC

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL
Open stage with Mark
Ammar

DRUID (JASPER AVENUE)
Open stage with Chris
Wynters and guest

LEGENDS PUB Open jam
hosted by Gary Thomas

O'BRYNE'S Celtic night with
Shannon Johnson and friends;
9:30pm

RED'S Lisa Marie Presley;
7pm

SIDETRACK CAFE Twisted
Agnostic Mountain Gospel
Choir CD release party; w/
The Creaking Tree String
Quartet; Stagger Lee
Shedden

URBAN LOUNGE Salsa and
the City; 9pm; Salsa dance
lessons 8pm; \$5 (door)

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Viva: with DJ Sean

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Top
40 with DJ Stephan

CALIENTE Bashment
Tuesdays: reggae with Bomb
Squad, Q.B., Chrome Nine,
Southside Sound, open mic;
11pm; no minors

FILTHY McNASTY'S Twisted
Trivia with DJ Whit-Ford

NEW CITY SUBURBS Bingo
with DJ Dillozer and MC
Fistinyourface

NEW CITY LOUNGE
Dominion with DJ Scott and
goth-metal guests

THE ROOST Flamingo Bingo:
with DJ Janny; 8-midnight; \$1
(member)/\$4 (non-member)

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT
AND LOUNGE Tapa Tuesday:
popular house beats with DJ
Kevin Wong

VICTORY LOUNGE
Liberation Tuesdays: emo,
hardcore, punkrock, scream-
core, classics and more with
DJs Leithal and Lam Harvey
Oswald

WUNDERBAR Tuesday
Night Shakedown: Featuring
Hug Patrol

WED
LIVE MUSIC

ATLANTIC TRAP & GILL
Open Mike

COMMONWEALTH STADIUM
Tim McGraw and THE
DANCEHALL DOCTORS,
GUESTS; 7pm; \$69-\$159;
tickets available at
TicketMaster 451-8000

LEGENDS PUB Hip-Hop/R&B
with DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LIBRARY
LOUNGE Glam, punk, indie
with DJ Skinny J, G-Wiz

RED STAR Funk 'n' Soul:

funk, disco, soul with Junior

Brown

THE ROOST Amateur Strip:

Weena Luv, Sticky Vicky with

DJ Alvaro; \$1 (member)/\$4

(non-member)

STANDARD Wednesday

Gone Wild Feat: with DJ

Nestor Delano

THE TWILIGHT ZONE
Wednesdayz Revisited: '80s,
alt rock, progressive dance
with DJ Jason LP; 8pm

RED'S Molson Canadian Rock
Search; 8pm

STOLLI'S ON WHYTE Blue
Velvet: urban electronica with
Derelict and Soulus

VICTORY LOUNGE We Sold
Our Souls For Rock 'n' Roll:
classic/retro rock, new hits
with the Juggernaut; no cover

WUNDERBAR Psycho Nite:
With DJs Seizures, Jony
Bologna, Take it to the Hill
Rahil

5:30pm; all ages event; \$16
(adv); tickets available at
TicketMaster, Megatunes,
Freecloud, Blackbyrd, FS
(WEM).

URBAN LOUNGE Boy with
Chunk; tickets at ticketmaster

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR
Wild Cherry: deep house/pro-
gressive/breaks with
Tripswitch and guests

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
Glitter Gulch: with DJ Buster
Friendly; no cover

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB Punk
rock, electroshock with DJ
Eddy Toonflash

J.J.'S PUB Subculture Night,
psychobilly, rockabilly, punk
with DJ Kustom

LEGENDS PUB Hip-Hop/R&B
with DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LIBRARY
LOUNGE Glam, punk, indie
with DJ Skinny J, G-Wiz

RED STAR Funk 'n' Soul:
funk, disco, soul with Junior

Brown

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(non-member)

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with the Juggernaut; no cover

WUNDERBAR Psycho Nite:
With DJs Seizures, Jony
Bologna, Take it to the Hill
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HAPPY HOUR PRICING IN EFFECT UNTIL 8 PM

Wednesday
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A NIGHT OF FINE TASTES. ALL IMPORT BEERS ON SPECIAL
AS WELL AS SWEERS OF FINELY FLAVOURED MEATS.

Import Beers - \$4.50
Satays - \$1

Thursdays
Wine & Food Experience

3 oz. each of three wines served with appetizers to
blend the perfection of taste and flavour

Every Thursday - \$15

THE
ONE
ON WHYTE

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Import Beers - \$4.50
Satays - \$1

VENUE GUIDE

ALLEGRO ITALIAN
KITCHEN 1001-109 St.
Edmonton, 424-6644

ARMOURY 10310-85 Ave,
702-1800

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL
7704-104 St, 432-4611

BACKDRAUGHT PUB 8307-
99 St, 430-9200

BLIND PIG, THE #32 - St.
Anne St, St. Albert, 418-6332

BACKSTAGE TAP AND
GRILL 12536-137 Ave, 457-
5555

BELLA BEANS COFFEE CAFE
13236-118 Ave, 454-2211

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE
Continental Inn, 16625 Stony
Plain Road, 484-7751

BILLY BUDD'S LOUNGE
9839-63 Ave, 438-1148

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE
10425-82 Ave, 439-1082

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL
32 St, St. Anne St, St. Albert,
418-6332

BOOTS 10242-106 St, 423-
5014

BRAVO BISTRO 9828-101A
Ave, 424-1010

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB
117258 Jasper Ave, 488-6636

CALENTE 10815 Jasper Ave,
425-0850

CARGO AND JAMES TEA
SHOPPE 10634-82 Ave, 433-
8152

CASINO (EDMONTON) 7055
Argyll Rd, 463-9467

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD)
12464-153 St, 463-9467

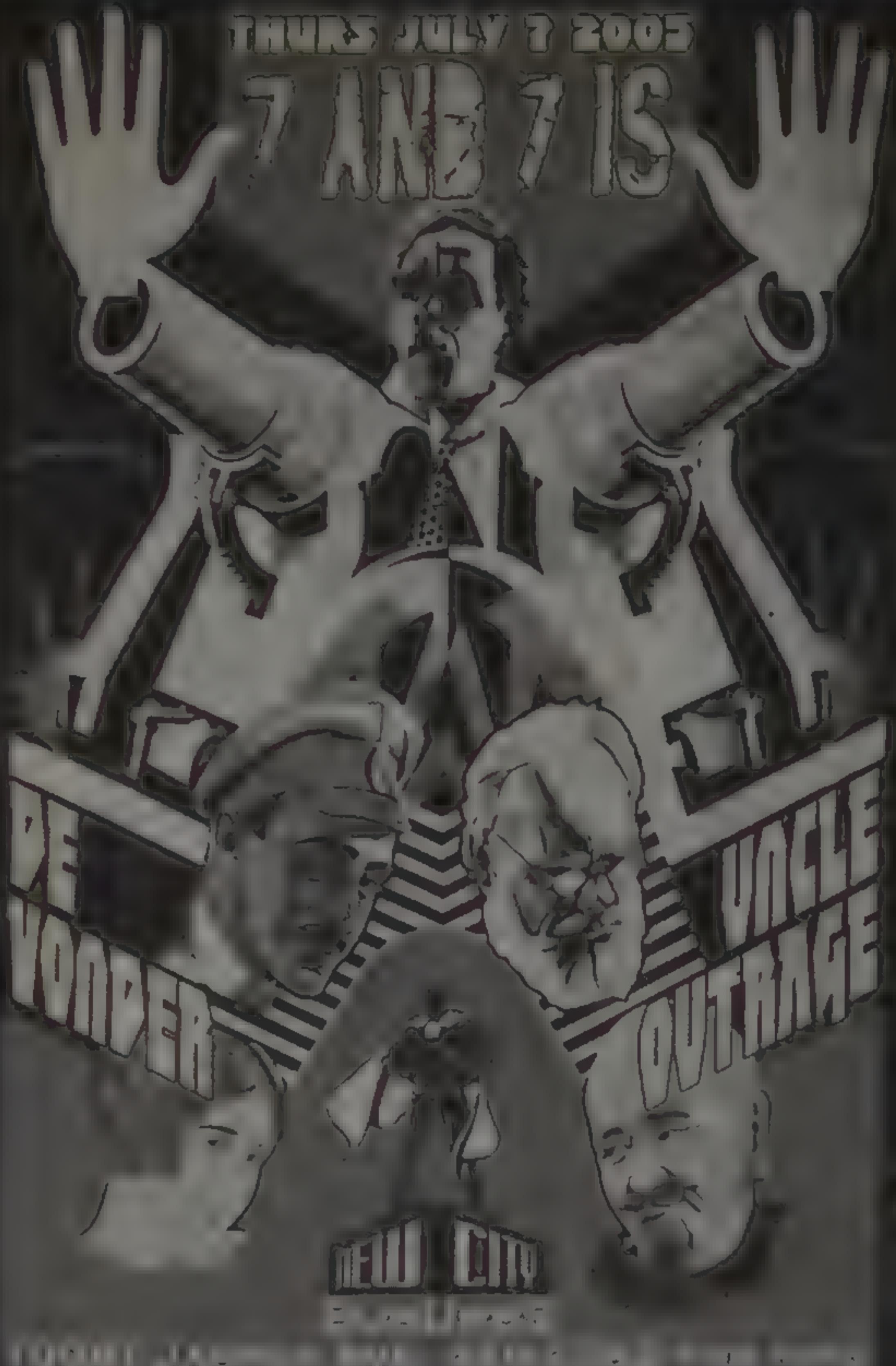
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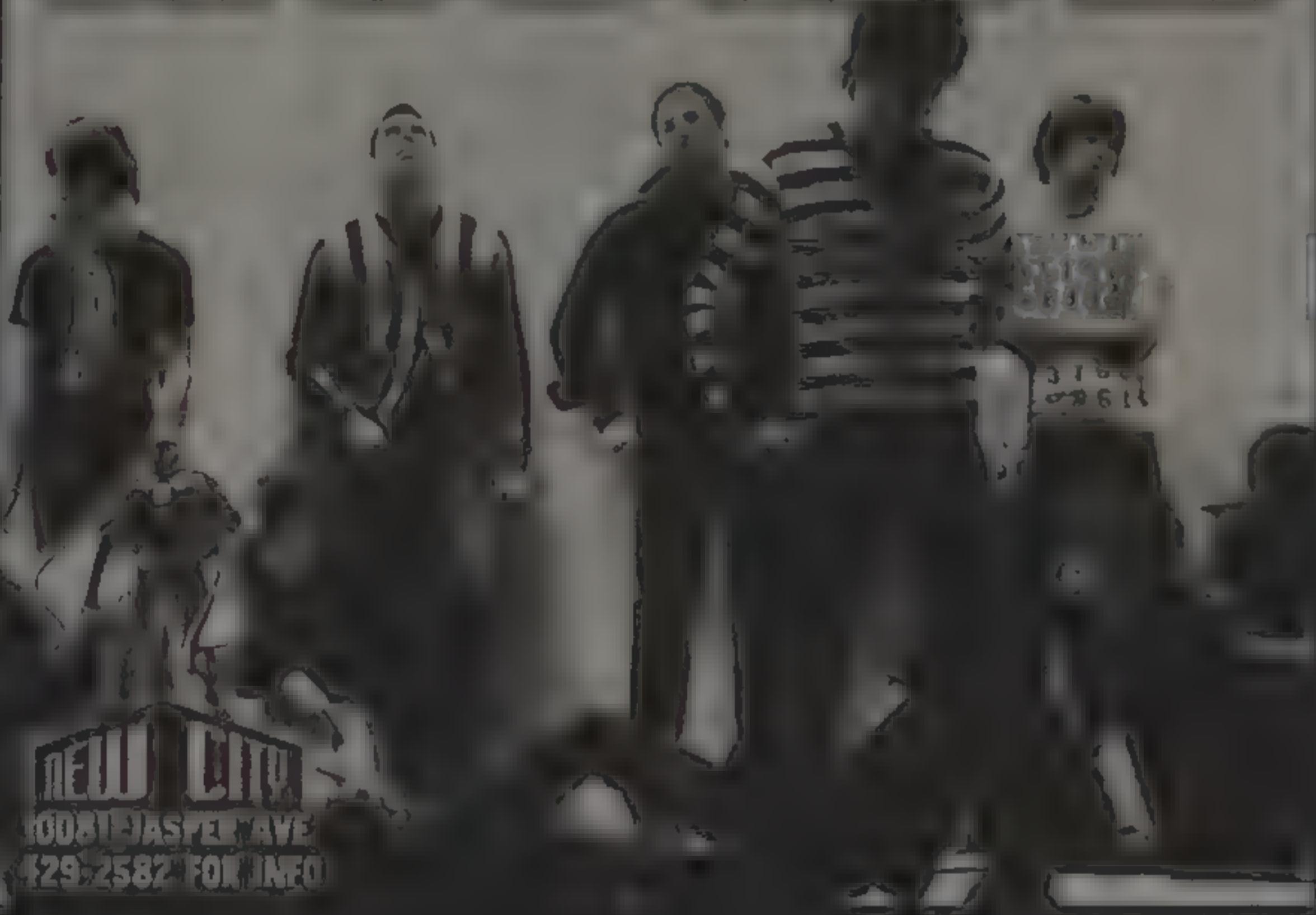


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MONDAYS
LOUNGE: Dj Dusty Grooves
SUBURBS: Closed

TUESDAYS

SUBURBS: BINGO!! With dj Dildozer and MC Fistinyourface
LOUNGE: Dominion with dj Scott & guests Goth-Metal

WEDNESDAYS

LOUNGE: DJ Skinny J & G-Wiz Glam-Punk-Indie
SUBURBS: Closed unless there's a live show.

THURSDAYS

LOUNGE: Jebus & Anarchy Adam – Rub-a-Dub
SUBURBS: Live Shows & Special Events

FRIDAYS

LOUNGE: Jebus & Adam

SUBURBS: Trasheteria:

DJ Texas Chainsaw Mascara and New City Crue.
Punk, classics, new shit, electro, etc. etc.

SATURDAYS

LOUNGE: Cool Curi & Guests – Atmosphere

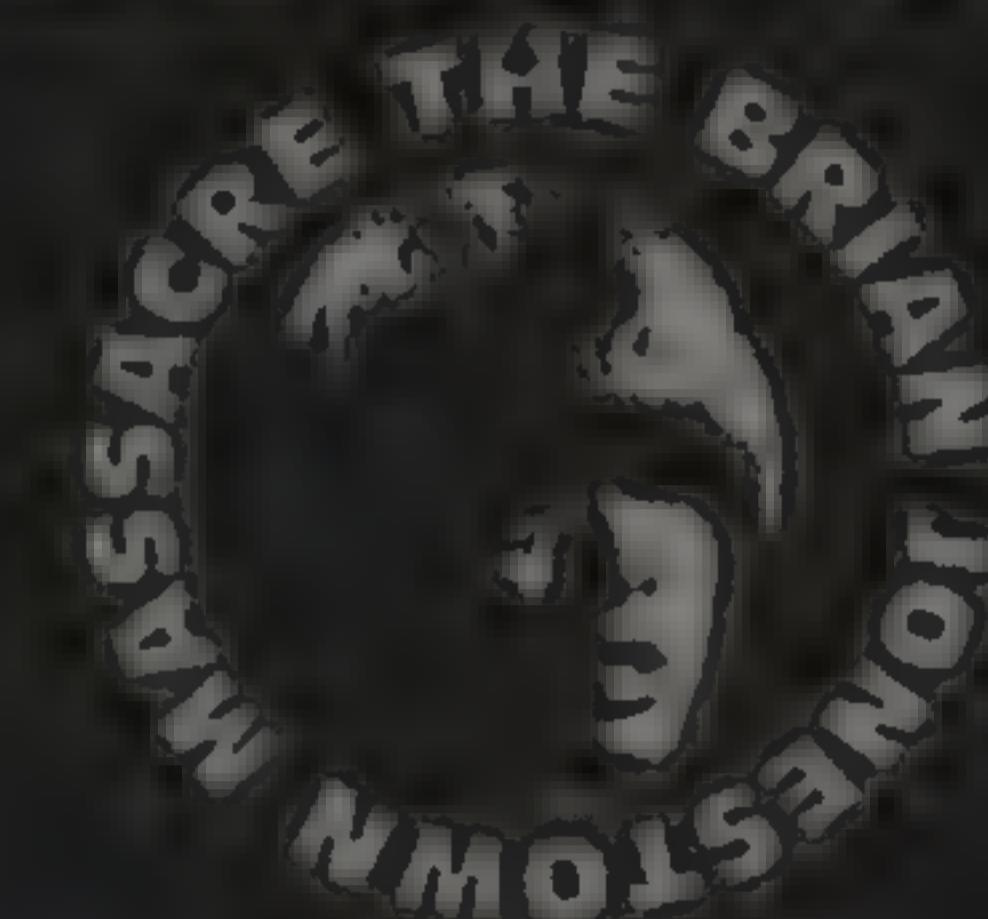
SUBURBS: SATURDAY SUCKS!! DJ Nik rofeelya & Bluejay

SUNDAYS

LOUNGE: Bust a Nut - DJ's Remo & Cool Curi

SUBURBS: Closed unless special event, live show

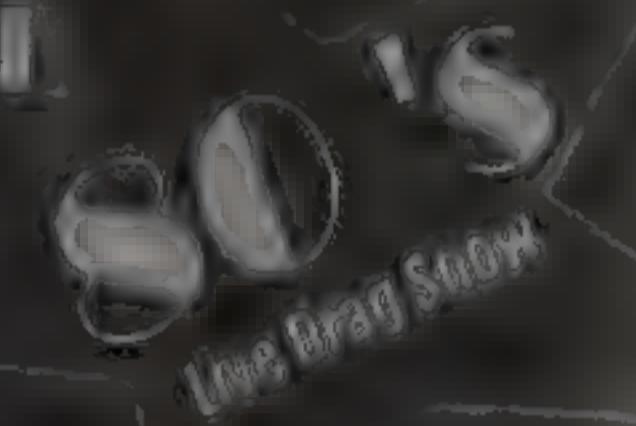
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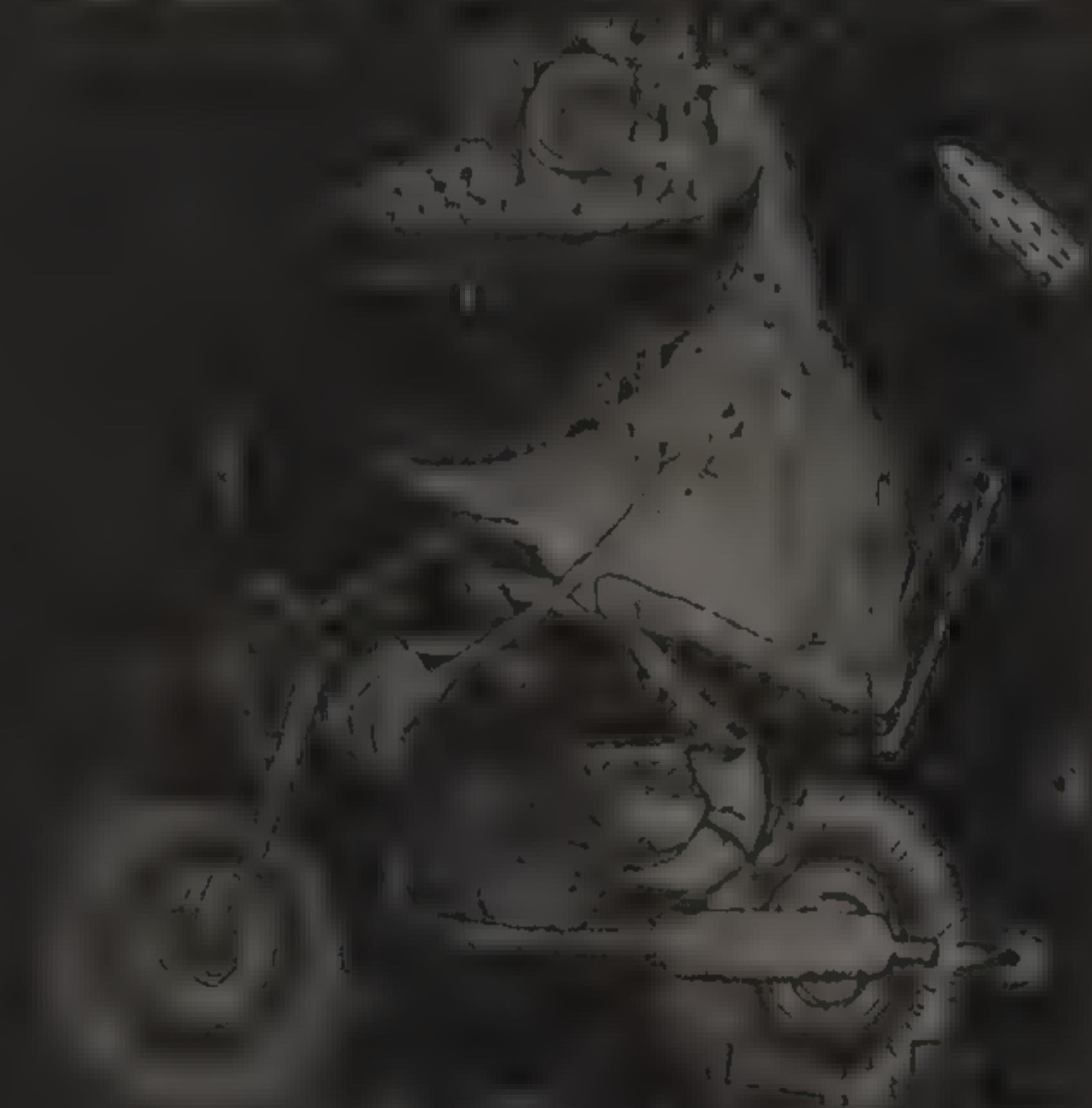
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Behold your Horses

The carnivalesque music of They Shoot Horses Don't They? isn't about playing the right notes

BY LEAH COLLINS

One or two bars into any They Shoot Horses Don't They? tune, and you'd be convinced the Vancouver septet was raised in a circus, the brood of some booming sideshow huckster (from whom singer Josh Neelands inherited his ringmaster style and bravado) and a trombone-wielding trailermate. Of the crashing horns and drums, tree-ring-pitch vocals and balloon animal hijinks of a They Shoot Horses, how weren't learned under the big top—in fact, the bulk of the ensemble spent more time at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design than under the wise tutelage of lion tamers and acrobats. Still, it came as little surprise when the group was picked up by Leaky Heaven Circus, an east Vancouver circus-cum-theatre collective.

As Neelands explains over the phone while strolling the windy

byways of Montreal, his group was handpicked by Leaky Heaven's musical director, Veda Hille, to spend three weeks composing the soundtrack for an act based on the Greek myth of Agamemnon. The band was naturally drawn to the prospect of joining the troupe; Neelands says they were just very interested in the chance to collaborate with a new group of people—especially families of trapeze artists and tumblers.

As such, Neelands is pretty adamant that They Shoot Horses'

PREVIEW CIRCUSY!

oom-pah and crashing-pots-and-pans style embraces more points of origin than straight-up rock 'n' roll. And he seems wonderstruck by how so many influences end up coming through in a finished song. "That's the thing that astounds me," he says. "I like a lot of music and there's a lot of good bands, but sometimes I'm wondering, all these people hear so many different kinds of music, but it doesn't necessarily show in their music. It'll just kind of be like, 'We're a rock 'n' roll band,'" he says, using a growly hardcore voice for emphasis.

"So, I think with us, I've had so many different experiences with so

many different types of music—and it's not like I'm trying to consciously put them in there, but it just sort of comes out. I'll be singing a melody and just kind of going off in rehearsal, and it'll probably be a while later, after the melody's been established, and it becomes part of a song that I'll realize that it has a gypsy flavour or whatever."

ONE OF THE BAND'S earliest influences still comes through pretty strong, though: high-school band class. Neelands has said in the past that They Shoot Horses' closest genre match was "marching band," at least in terms of the rhythm and how good the music feels. But, he says, playing music now causes a much different sensation than it did in his actual high-school band days. "With high-school band," he says, "I was just trying to make sure that I was playing the right notes or hitting the drum at the right time. With this, we're absolutely not concerned with hitting the right notes—some wrong notes sound great and it's more completely about the feel and energy."

Indeed, there's a strong appreciation of human error in They Shoot Horses' work—the sort of musical playfulness, where, Neelands says, "at any given point anything could



happen and it wouldn't disrupt the music. You can scream and yell over top of it, and it would become a part of the activity that's going on."

Which is why Neelands says he can't help but be inspired by the charm of kids trying as hard as he did to hit the right note, and not quite making it. "Once, when I was walking through a park, there was a high-school band playing in the very same band shelter that I had played in when I traveled to Victoria. And there were these kids up there playing and it was so good," he says. "It's even better, because they were trying like myself to play

everything right, but they were hitting the wrong notes, but it had this beautiful charm to it, and even though they were all a little bit stiff and scared, every person, every kid in that group, had a character to them. It was really funny—they were really trying hard, but they don't quite do it right."

"That's the sort of thing you start to learn," he concludes, "that there's good stuff pretty much everywhere in expression. Even if it is clumsy."

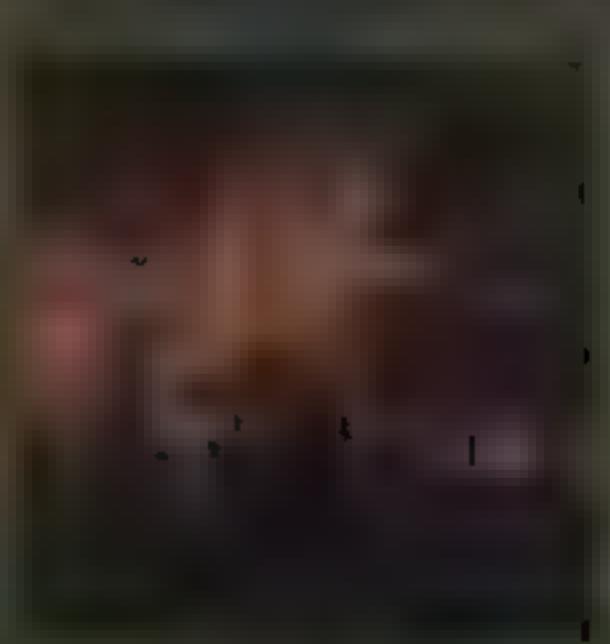
THEY SHOOT HORSES DON'T THEY?
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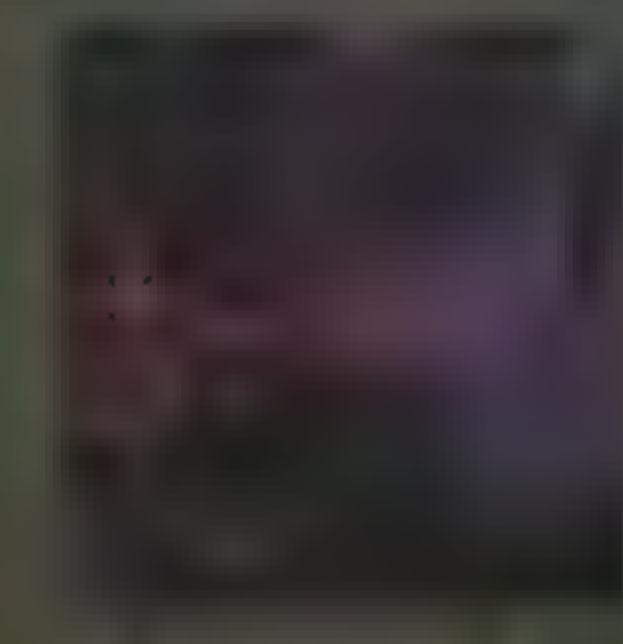
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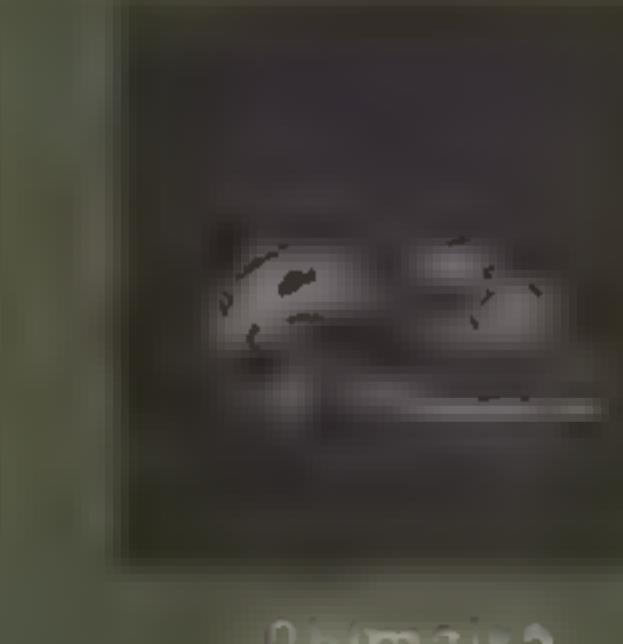
THE BIG CHORD



DAVY JONES



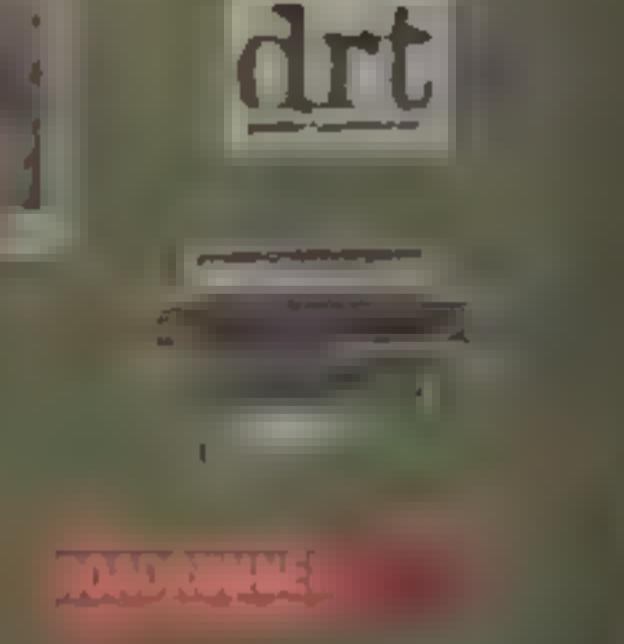
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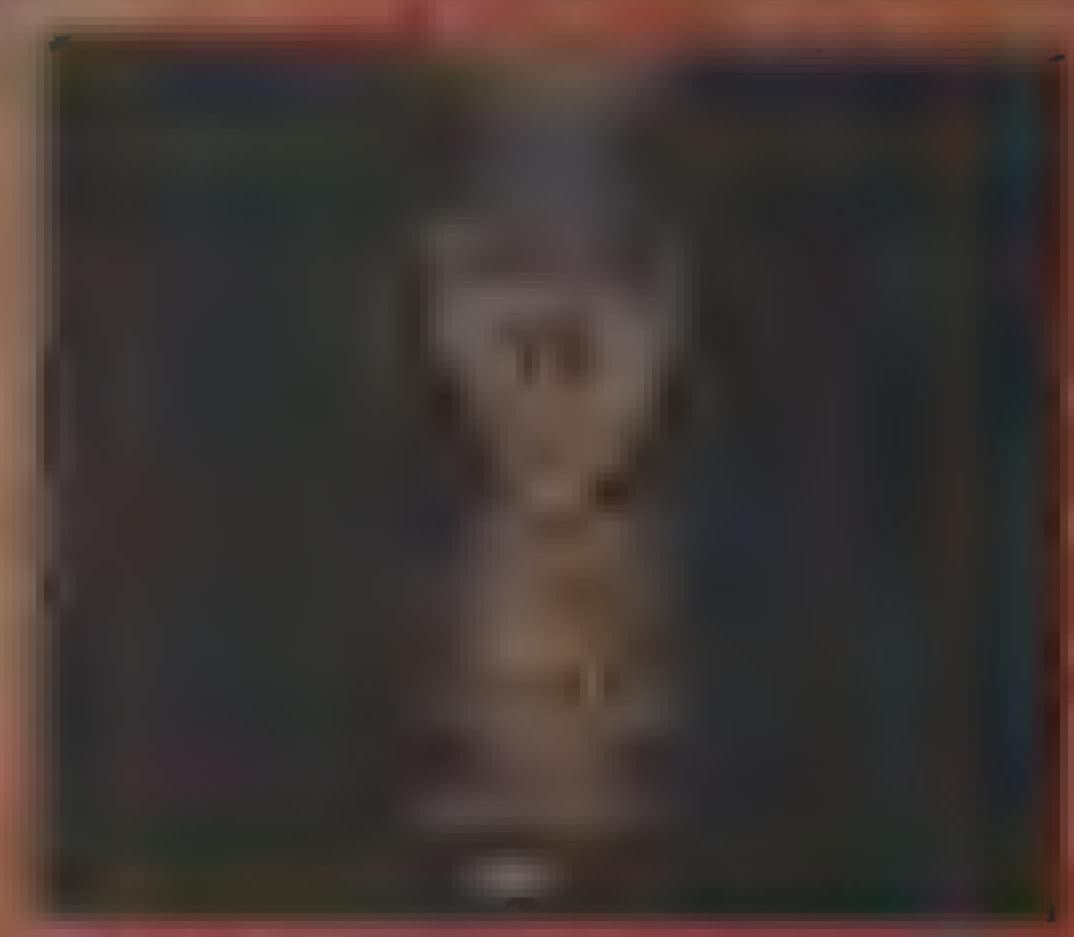
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SUN 7/13



You can't touch this

No Hands has released a new EP, and a full-length now seems within reach as well

BY MIKE LAROCQUE

Most bands tend to release an EP early in their career, dropping four or five songs so that fans, promoters and labels can get a taste of their music. But for Clayton Skinner, frontman of local group No Hands and a veteran of various other Edmonton bands over the last seven years, an EP is the last thing on his mind.

"It's fairly ridiculous," laughs Skinner, who also runs the band's label, Roast Records. "In all the bands I've been in, I've put out four EPs in, like, the last seven years. I'm really itching to put out a full-length, but it's always just out of reach. Bands become so fragile and are about to break apart, so you ease an EP. But things aren't fragile at all with No Hands."

ONE WOULD HOPE NOT, given the band has just released *Roughing It in the Bush*, their sophomore EP and the followup to their acclaimed debut EP, *Free for All*. Although Skinner claims that things are still sitting pretty in the No Hands camp, that doesn't mean things haven't begun to change for the band since their first release. In fact, he thinks some fans might not recognize them at all. "The debut EP was geared towards more straight-up guitar rock 'n' roll," Skinner explains. "We now know how to do that—we know how to play in a rock 'n' roll band with two guitars, a bass and a drummer. I think some of the people who liked the first disc might listen to this one and be like, 'What the hell? We took more risks on this one, but at the same time, I'm not

trying to alienate fans."

The band, which employed a more drum-heavy rock sound on

PREVIEW ROCK

their first release, has shifted towards a more experimental sound, with the emphasis now on vocals

and melody. While Skinner willingly admits that the band was more than ready to take their music in a new direction, the decision to retool their sound may not have been entirely voluntary. In fact, No Hands was suffering from what has become the biggest cliché in rock

SEE PAGE 47

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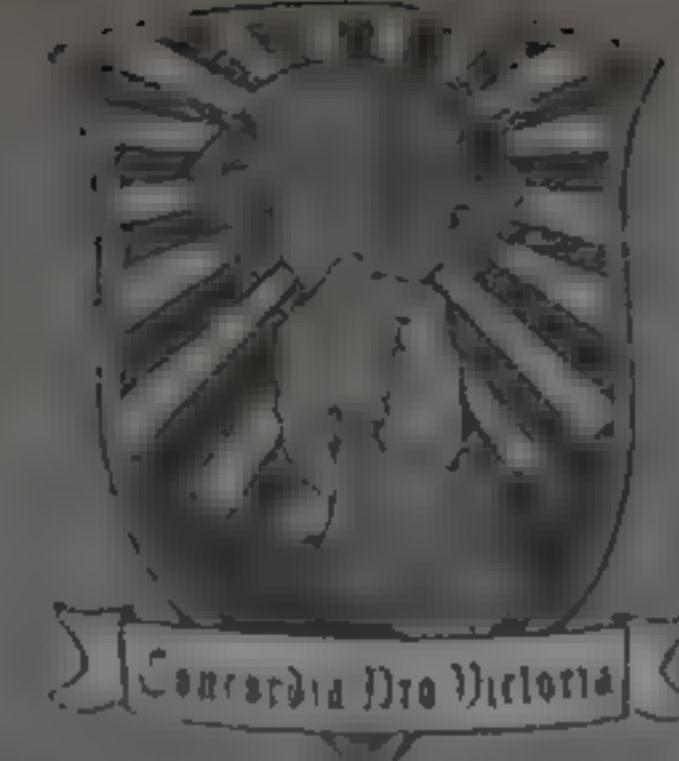
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...we got promised these things... we just sorta jumped into the... and didn't worry about it. Then... shit started happening it was...

Wow. This is all right.'

"For example," he continues, "I'm undoubtedly the greatest guitar player ever. I'm sort of unknown right now, but once you see me, you'll know. I can take any kind of liquid like gasoline or Windex or whatever and ingest it and it immediately becomes booze in my stomach; that's pretty amazing. I can also levitate things, shoot flames out of my guitar and I'm also the most handsome man in the universe. I have a three-foot-long penis; right now I weigh 160 pounds but when I get an erection I weigh 287 pounds. It's like being another person with me."

SO WHAT ABOUT all those other aspiring rock stars with a soul burning a hole in their body, eager for a quick route to fame and glory—how do they get in on this sweet-sounding deal? "There's actually representatives with us on the road," Parkins says. "If you come to the show, you'll see them on either side of the stage dressed in their ceremonial gear and they're doing things like spraying the audience with blood, stinging demons into people and singing around the ceremonial beer keg people drink from. We also have a nine-foot corpse that comes out and shoots stage-blood out at the audience."

But this tour isn't just about reaping a dark harvest for the underlord—it's also a chance to promote the *Zombie Night in Canada* compilation. Even though this massive celebration of Canadian rockabilly/psychobilly came out last summer (and a second one is already in the works), it's taken a while to organize a suitably wicked lineup. And while Canada can't compete with the full-on rockabilly renaissance currently taking place south of the border and spawning massive festivals like last weekend's Lootenanny in California, things are definitely happening up here. "There's a pretty good scene in Canada right now, actually," Parkins says, "and I think *Zombie Night* is a pretty good example of what's going on that way. There's so many different takes on the genre. Because everybody's so spread out geographically, nobody really influences each other. Nobody really gets a chance to see too many bands like themselves, so there's a really cool variation of styles." ☀

ZOMBIE NIGHT IN CANADA
With the Matadors, the Deadcats and Raygun Cowboys • Sidetrack Café • Fri, July 8 (8pm)

No Hands

Continued from page 45

music: drummer problems.

"One of our drummers passed away," Skinner says, "and then we had trouble again with another, and it was just becoming a burden because we couldn't accomplish anything with this rotating cast of drummers. After abandoning drummers altogether we started using a

drum machine. It's one of the best things to happen to us in terms of songwriting, because the drums are so simple—or as simple as you want them to be—and so you can really have that much more control over what you can do with the songs. Rather than have the drums really crazy and in and of themselves a large part of what is going on in a song, they're now more of the backbone and the other stuff becomes the focus.

"People tell us we're living the dream," he continues. "Drummers are notoriously crazy or off-the-wall. We're not anti-drummer, though; I just figured I could have much more control over the rhythm this way, and it worked out really well."

Only time will tell if the changes will work as well on the record as Skinner thinks, but the smart money is on a warm reception. So what's next for No Hands? Skinner's still

dreaming of that coveted full-length recording, which finally seems attainable with a solidified lineup and a band that's creating some buzz. "Getting down to work and touring, as well as a lot of songwriting and recording are priorities," Skinner says. "I just want to be really prolific." ☀

NO HANDS CD RELEASE

With the Last Deal and the Neins Circa • Sidetrack Café • Sat, July 9 (8pm)

No Hands

Continued from page 45

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Stabilo. Still the Boss.

“Little indie band that could” poised to release their first label-backed full-length

REVIEWED BY ROBERT BROWN

Maybe we music journalists are just lazy, but when we talk about bands, we tend to focus on one, usually very small, part of their overall persona. If someone were to write a story about the Flaming Lips, for instance, they'd almost surely point out their penchant for atmospherics and off-kilter lyrics: *Death From Above 1979* can't

do an interview without someone pointing out how strange it is that they don't use a guitar. And so it was for Vancouver acoustic-poppers St. Bilo, who spent the early part of the decade trading on their name as the little indie band that could.

It's a reputation that stems largely from the success of "Everybody," a self-produced single that became one of the most-requested rock songs on Vancouver radio back when they were still known as Stahlo Boss. That success was a major reason why the foursome wa

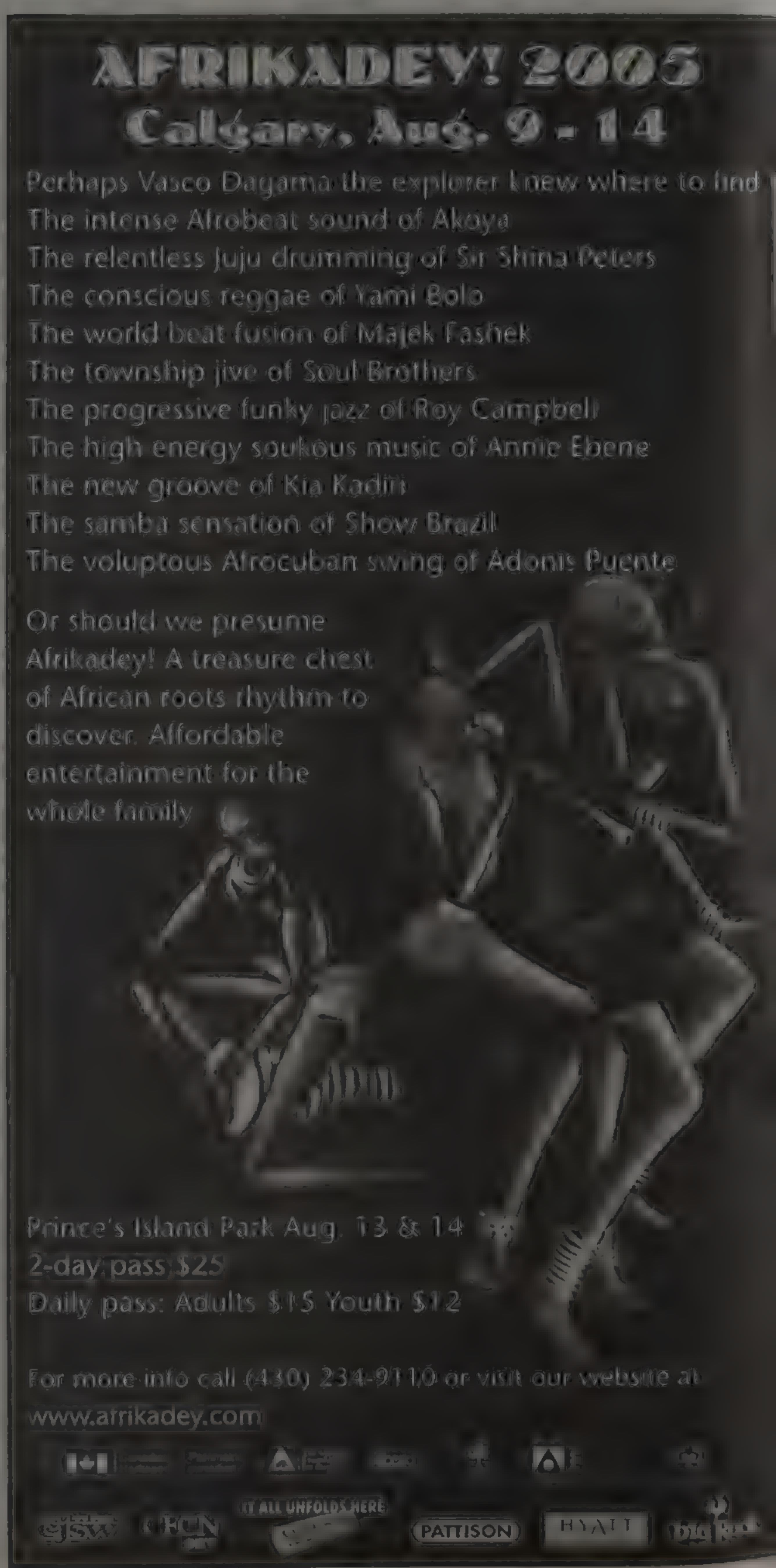
nominated for the
2003 Canadian
Radio Music Award
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Group, the only band on the list that wasn't backed by a major label.

Predictably, the labels came a knockin' soon after, and in 2004

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signed to EMI, who released a single EP, *Cupid?*, a collection of songs and tracks culled from the three previous indie releases. The album garnered some pretty attention for the band, making a dent on rock charts across the country. Now, Stabilo is getting ready to head back into the studio for their label-backed full-length in August, thus marking the official end of their "indie band" guise. Lead acoustic guitarist Jesse Stabilo, though, isn't too worried

about losing their indie aura; in fact, he says, Stabilo has adjusted to life on a label, though it did take some getting used to.

"There's a lot of pros and a lot of cons," explains Dryfhout over the phone from Ontario, where the group recently finished a mini-tour. "One of the positive things is definitely that we have so much more opportunity to record what we want to record, record who we want to record with and things like that. The attention that you get definitely

helps everything out, but at the same time, you're not on your own schedule anymore, so you can't always do exactly what you want. But you still have more opportunity to do more things, so it balances."

THE LACK OF CONTROL Dryfhout alludes to is a major reason why their followup to *Cupid?* hasn't appeared until now, a delay the band isn't exactly thrilled about. But, Dryfhout explains, there are benefits to being pushed back too—namely

the chance to work with the producer responsible for, among other things, Liz Phair's *Exile in Guyville*.

"It's been quite a while since we put an album out," Dryfhout says, "and things were sort of held off for various reasons that wouldn't necessarily happen if we were still an independent band, but that's not always a bad thing. We'll be going down to L.A. to record, which we couldn't have before, and we're working with Brad Wood, which we're really looking forward to.... I don't think we're

nervous—I think we're all ready, and I actually think this will probably be a much better album. The last EP was sort of just a bunch of stuff thrown together, and we're proud of it, but I don't think that it's necessarily exactly what we wanted to go out with. Not that we dislike it, of course, but it's just not a full album. And this one will be."

STABILO

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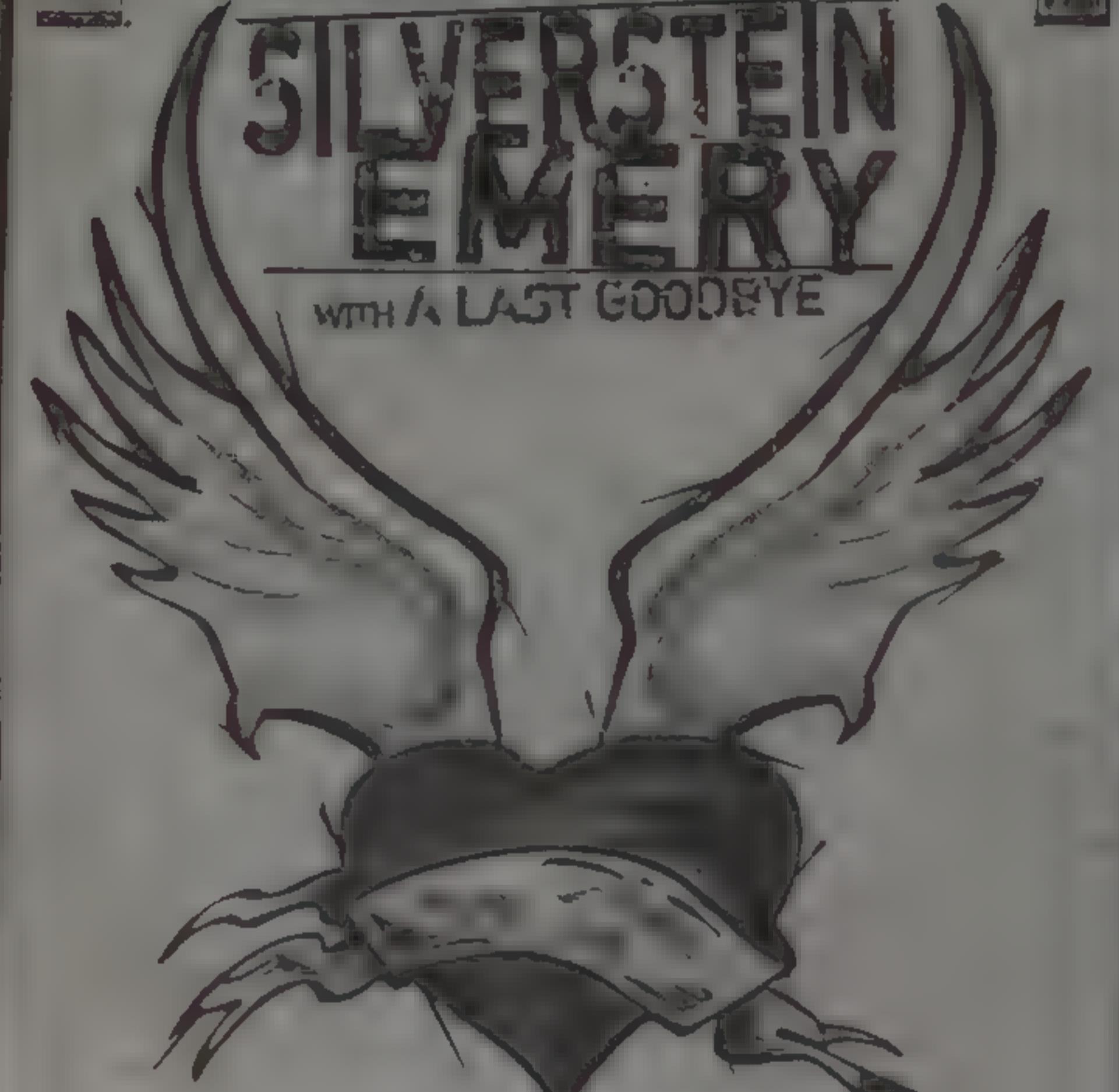
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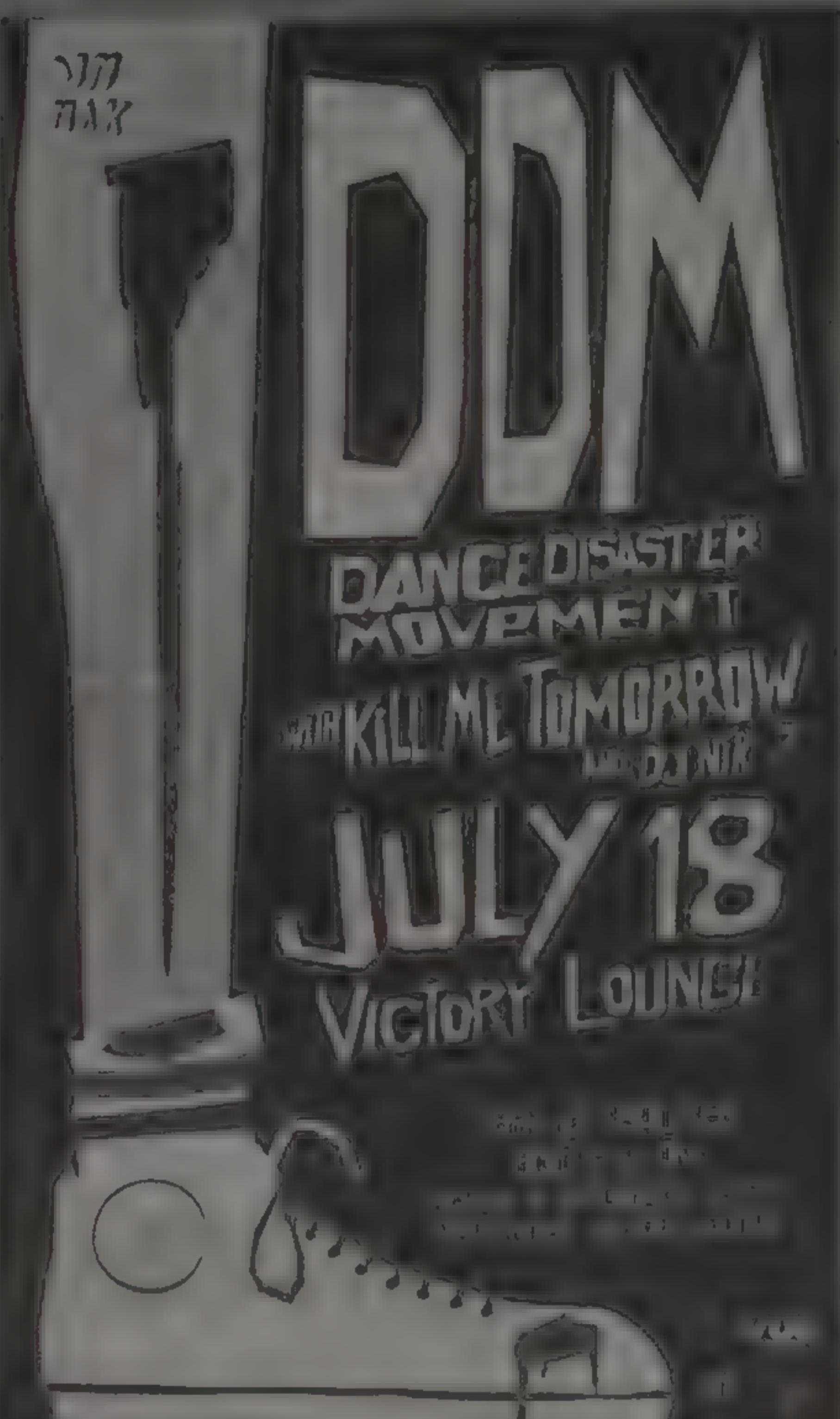


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ARTHUR and the Knights of the Sound Republic



Rockabilly man
Ronnie Hayward
turns over a new
leaf with bebop
"Orkestrio"

BY STEVEN SANDOR

For just over a decade, Ronnie Hayward, Vancouver's undisputed king of all things rockabilly, with six albums to his credit, wanted to branch out and do something completely different. He wanted to play the kind of jazz that would invoke the memory of the glory days of bebop and beatniks. "I was always interested in the jazz music of the '50s and '60s," Hayward explains. "I always enjoyed the music of Sun Ra and the other improvised jazz of that time. And I had always wanted to do that. It was just a matter of finding a group of musicians I could do it with."

Enter Ronnie Artur, Hayward's jazzy alter ego, and with his new record, *Get This!*, Hayward—er, Artur—hits the listener with cool basslines and lyrics that come off like an angry bohemian sassing off to anyone with a day job or life goals. But for those who have heard Artur and his Orkestrio on record, the live version promises to be much different. Depending on which musicians are available, his backing band ranges in size from night to night, from a four-piece combo all the way to a mammoth eight-member ensemble. Artur will appear onstage as a part of a four-piece when he hits the Side-track stage next week with drums, steel guitar, trumpet and bass in tow.

"It is very much an improvised thing," says Hayward. "It's a differ-

ent feel every time we play. Even the lyrics are improvised somewhat from show to show. The songs all have an amount of space to them, and the lyrics, as vague as they can be, are usually directed. So that allows us to include new things in the lyrics depending on what is happening in that place and time—or what isn't happening."

THIS WILL BE the first time Hayward will be appearing outside Vancouver with this version of the Orkestrio—and in true improv spirit, he's totally looking forward to not knowing what to expect. "There is something special about working with people who can

be creative within the spirit of the project that you are all doing together,"

he says. "You want to be able to work with people who can do creative things to your music. You need that. Without it, you're kind of beat."

All the tracks on *Get This!* save for three were written by Hayward over the past 10 years while he tried to get his jazz project off the ground. Only the Edith Piaf classic "I Shouldn't Care" and two of Hayward's old blues-country standards ("Meet Me Come By" and "Don't Look When You Go") were songs that Hayward hadn't targeted for this project. "I wanted to do this," he says, "because this type of music is so free and so different from the country, rock and rockabilly I had done for years."

Hayward may be familiar to Edmonton audiences as a player of some pretty hot rockabilly, but this time around, his Artur persona is going to cool things down. Way cool.

RONNIE ARTUR

AND HIS ORKESTRI

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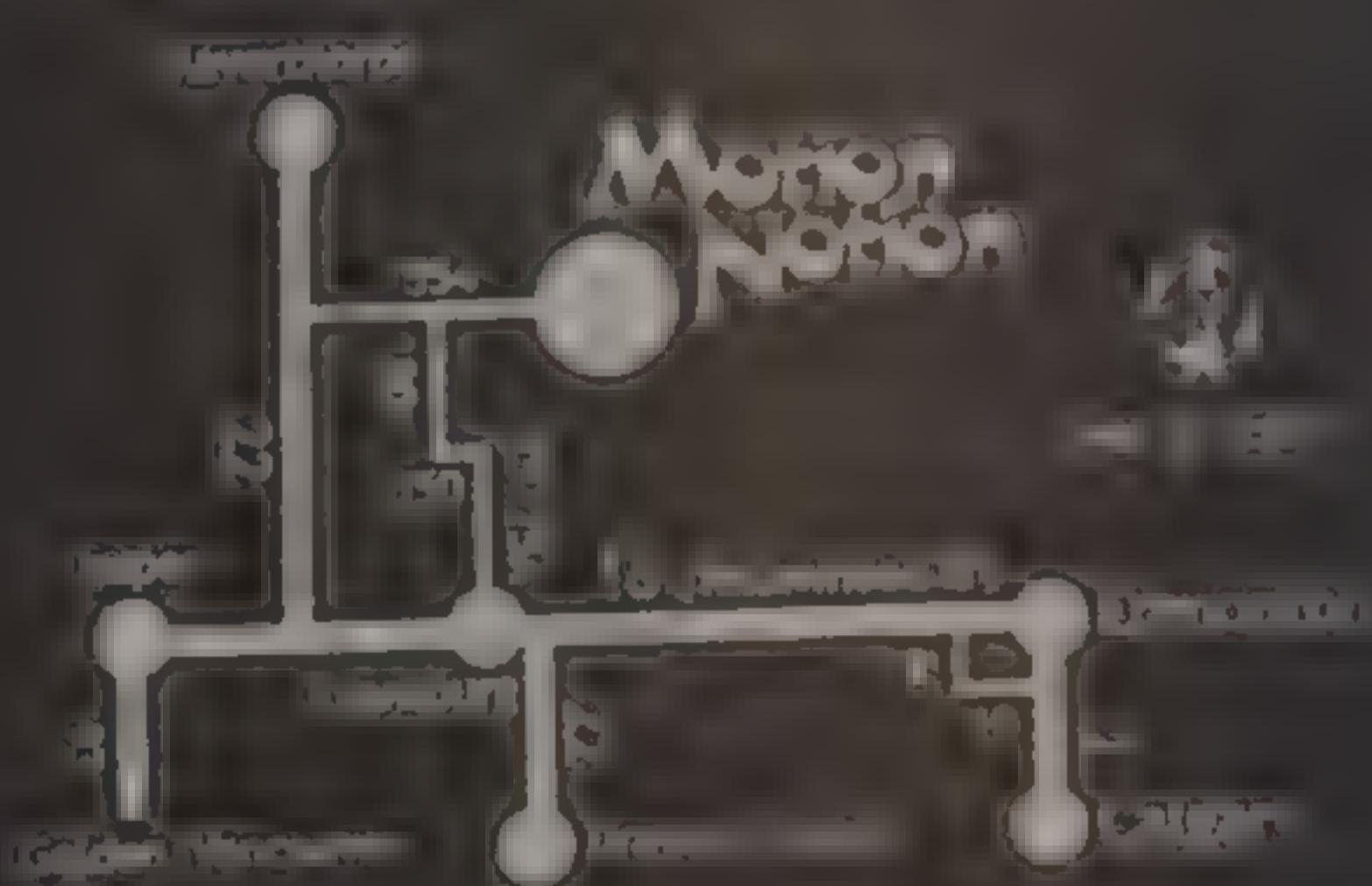
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GET BEHIND
ME SATAN
6. SYSTEM OF A
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MESMERIZE
7. AUDIOSLAVE
OUT OF EXILE
8. K-OS
JOYFUL REBELLION
9. BACKSTREET BOYS
NEVER GONE
10. DEF LEPPARD
ROCK OF AGES

top 10 dvds

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2. THE PACIFIER
3. THE SOPRANOS:
SEASON 5
4. REN & STIMPY:
SEAS 3 & 4 HALFTIME
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6. WWE:
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INDECISION 2004
9. SNATCH
10. THE AVIATOR

NEW SOUNDS

MICHELLE SHOCKED DON'T ASK DON'T TELL (MIGHTY SOUND)

The first thing you hear on Michelle Shocked's new album is the sound of glass breaking, followed by the band kicking into the jazzy groove of "Early Morning Saturday"; the shattered sound is the perfect opening for what Shocked has described as "The Divorce Album." The songs on *Don't Ask Don't Tell* chronicle the breakdown of the singer's marriage, but they do so without simply wallowing in the pain. Oh, there's plenty of hurt, but it's all filtered through a set of tunes that pull you in with their addictive hooks while the band provides musical therapy.

Shocked covers plenty of territory here, from the chugging rock of "How You Play the Game" to the Texas border sounds of "Evacuation Route" to the punked-up "Hi Skool." "Don't Ask" reminds me of the kind of boozy, late-night storytelling that Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band used to

engage in during their mid-'70s live shows, but Shocked doesn't sound like she's copying the style; rather, it's more about the mood, and she and her band capture it beautifully. The same goes for the electric blues of "Used Car Lot." So often, when contemporary musicians tackle the blues, it sounds as though they're merely doing it to establish a little credibility. Not so here. Shocked's band grapples with the music, wrestles it to the ground and make it their own.

Don't Ask is the kind of breakup album that you want to hear again and again. It's not easy, but it lets you feel the emotions that Shocked is singing about, rather than smothering them beneath some slick production.

★★★★ —EDEN MUNRO

THE WHITE STRIPES GET BEHIND ME SATAN (V2)

You know, I never thought I'd hear anyone say this, let alone me, but...

Jack White really needs to indulge himself more, because this album, with all its influences from Southern blues to Caribbean flavours, is really held back by one thing: Jack's apparent need to cling tightly to his garage-rock roots.

Really, if he'd just let himself go full-on into his quirks—drop the guitar/drums thing entirely, maybe hire himself a big brass band, hell, start playing the keyboard—the White Stripes' albums would instantly get a lot more interesting. Not that *Get Behind Me Satan* is bad in any way; it's just restrained, representing the farthest one could venture away from rock while still qualifying as a rock album. It seems like there should be more here: the Stripes toss in some of the best rock piano ever on tracks like "My Doorbell" and "The Denial Twist," and the percussion experiment, from the strains of marimbas and tambourine to the almost arrhythmic crashing on "The Nurse," could lead to some interesting stuff in the future—but none of it feels like it was run at full-tilt. That said, maybe this album is just a stepping stone, a half-painted road sign that tells of wondrous things to come.

—DAVID BERRY

WOLF PARADE WOLF PARADE (SUB POP)

It all rings very familiar: another indie-rock band from Montreal garners a devoted following and online Pitchfork-type buzz on the strength of tours with über-hip artists (in this

case, the Arcade Fire and Modest Mouse), and its affiliation with the label of Montreal. And even if such a connection to Wolf Parade's self-titled (their first release on Sub Pop being this fall, when the label drops the hotly anticipated full-length *Apologies to the Queen Mary*, which *Time* called the most anticipated release of the year), is a mite unfairly dismissive, one can help feeling the four tracks on *Get Behind Me Satan* are singing the same old song.

Besides the now-de rigueur drums and keyboards, Dan Boeckner's vocals seem unplaceably familiar—sometimes reminiscent of a more emotionally attuned Beck, but more of Modest Mouse's perpetually all-choked-up Isaac Brock (no surprise, considering longtime Wolf Parade fan Brock produced two of the EP's four tracks).

The opening song, "Shining Light," shoots off like elastic bands, setting a broken-down-mechanical momentum that doesn't let up until the final tune, "Lousy Pictures," where Boeckner's emotionally strained creaky sound as though they're struggling for air against the organ and drums. Which is to say there's still something there that'll keep you listening even if you could swear this record's indie-pop melodies have all been heard before.

★★★★ —LEAH COLLINS

JON-RAE AND THE RIVER OLD SONGS FOR THE NEW TOWN (PERMAFROST)

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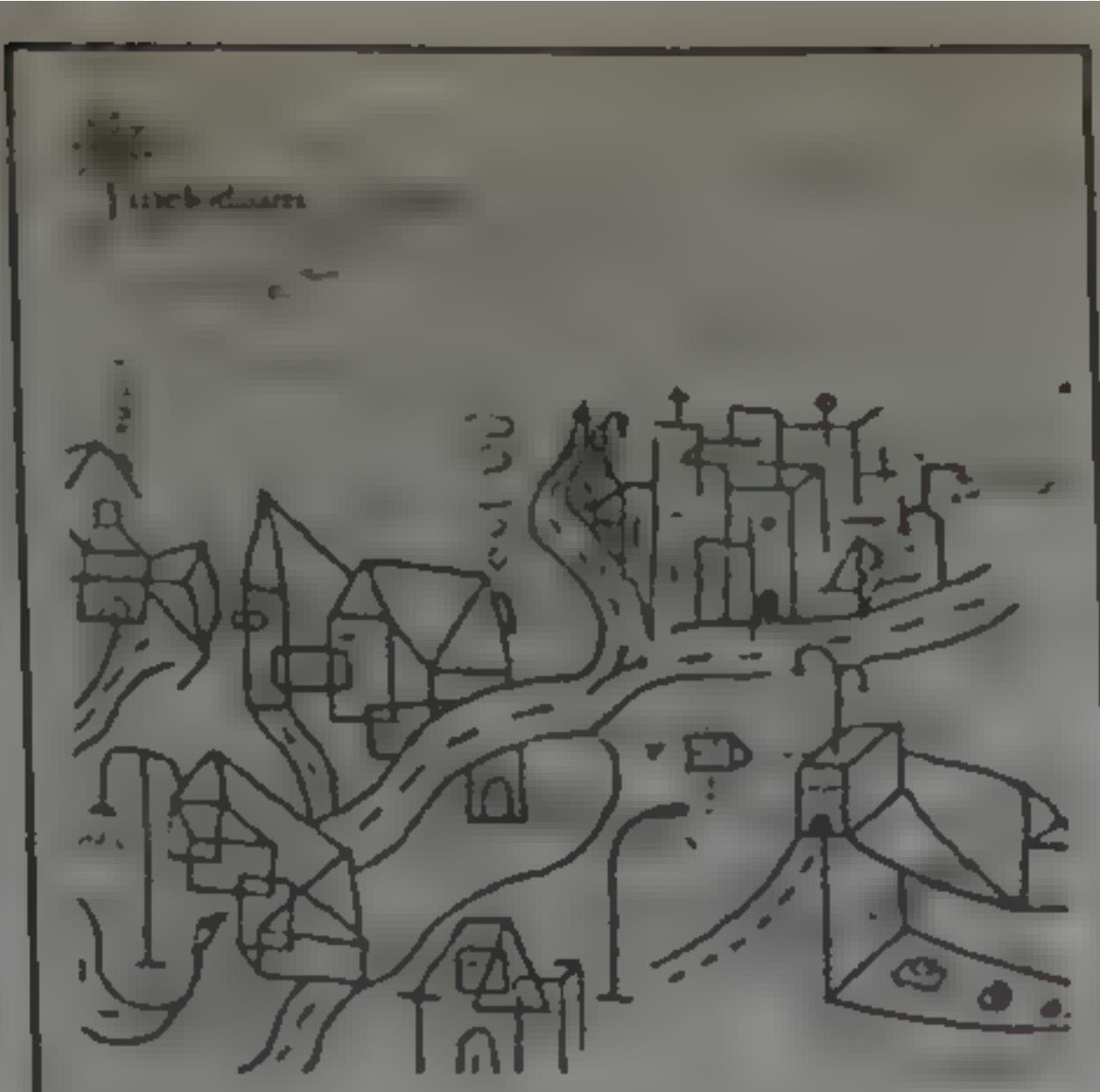
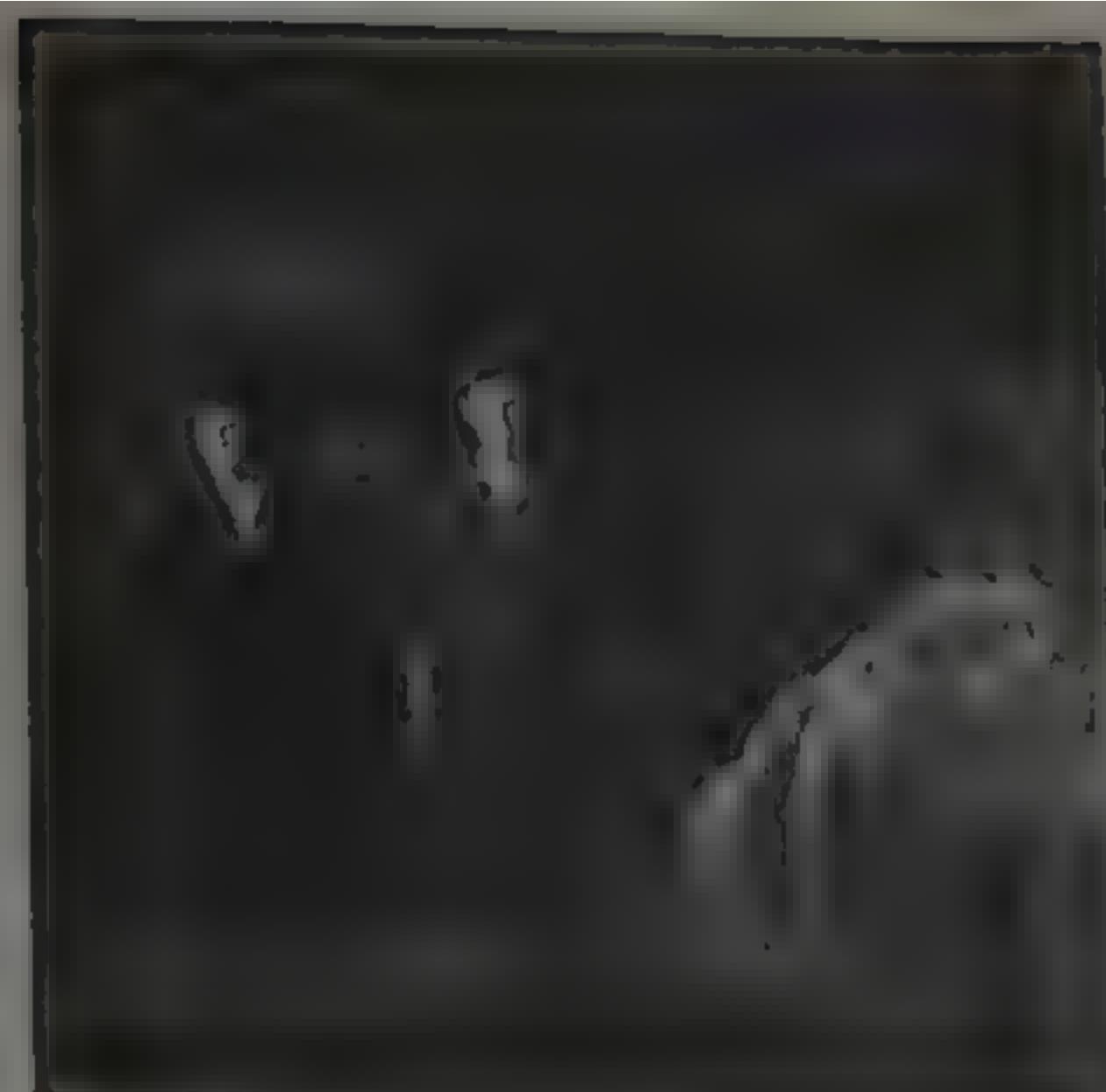
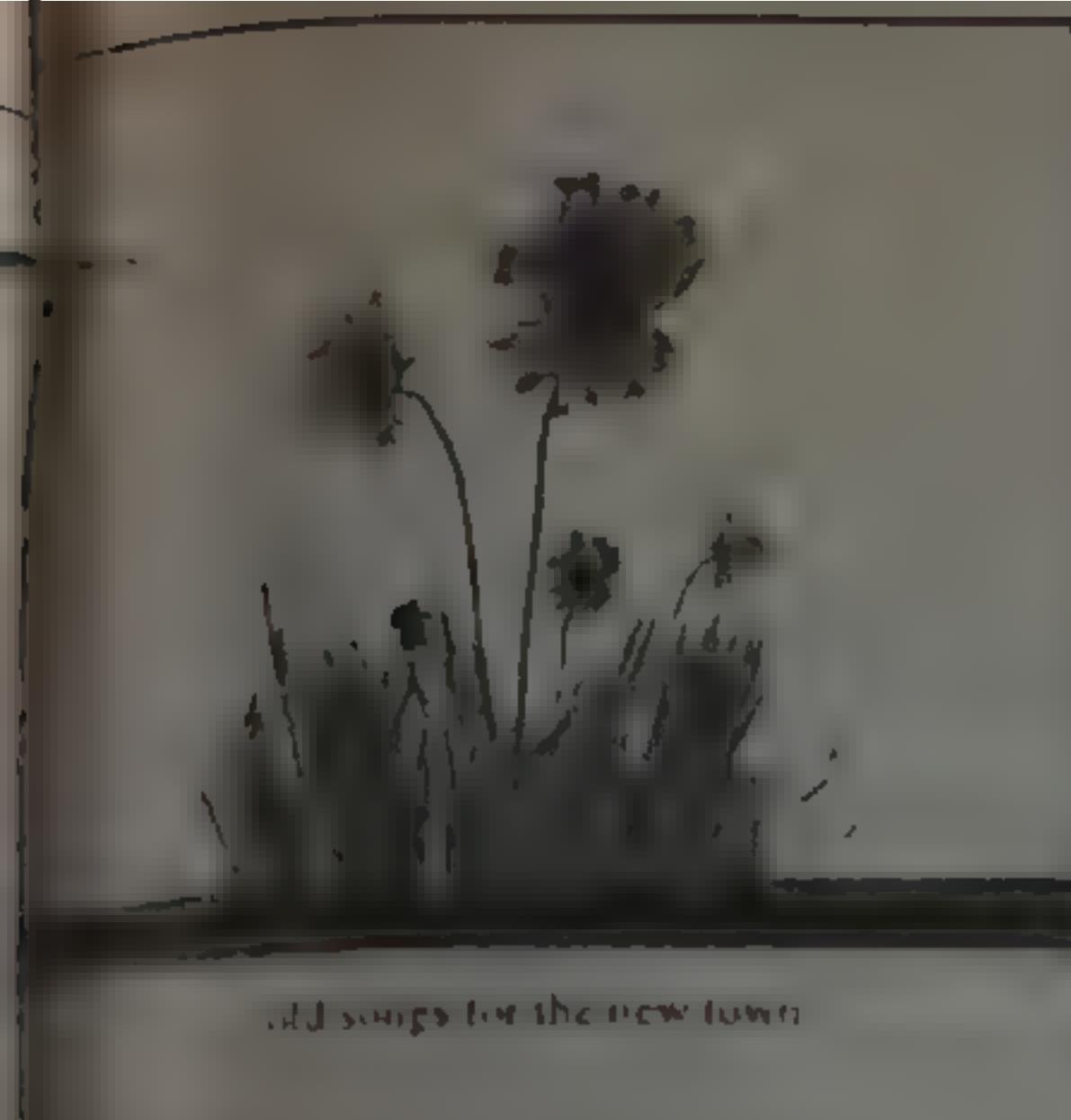
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01. illinois sufjan stevens
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03. a't whitey houston
04. a river ain't too much to love smog
05. everything ecstatic four tet

06. gimme fiction spoon
07. multiples keith fullerton whitman
08. another day on earth brian eno
09. la foret xiu xiu
10. in case we die architecture in helsinki



CARDINAL CARDINAL (WISHING TREE)

Here somewhere and, while it's not a losing battle, it's not giving without a fight. At least, that's how after listening to *Old Songs for the Town* from Jon-Rae and the River. The album has the feel of a traveling soul, with Jon-Rae Fletcher playing the role of the preacher who's all brim-and fire, scaring us with his dark and then letting in a sliver of light song of hope.

He music sounds like it was recorded live to a tape deck, capturing that too often gets sterilized in recording studio. Fletcher's voice has to reach the notes, but the humans push him just over the rise of their ragtag sounds, creating a drowsy cacophony. Despite the shadow hanging overhead, however, the album is not mired in capricious dread. There is a balance here: "Prayer to God" is a mumble-babble, while "Come Back to Me" is a plea for love that builds into an almost spiritual singalong. There's a touch of humour as well: "Happy Days" is a tale of the frustration that comes with trying to find redemption. Days end on a particularly strong note with the simple sentiment of the rustic "Goodbye," which melds seamlessly into the propulsive "Nickel Time/Waste of Time." Good and evil have never sounded so good.

★★★ —EDEN MUNRO

Walk of Fame, or that you're worthy of a reissue with 11 bonus tracks and extensive liner notes. ★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

MELODIUM LA TÊTE QUI FLOTTE (AUTRES DIRECTIONS IN MUSIC)

Maybe it's because there's just so much music journalism out there, and so many critics championing bands you'll never hear, that Cardinal has decided to reissue their one and only 1994 album with a bunch of bonus tracks. The sticker on the CD says it all: "The 21-track deluxe re-issue of the classic Cardinal album fronted by underground rock favourites Richard Davies and Eric Matthews." Basically, this album got a few decent reviews back in the day, and because some scenester back then thought that this duo was the cat's ass, some label has decided to reissue it, hailing the band's seminal importance to the world of rock.

Yes, it's decent guitar pop; Richard Davies is no doubt a good songwriter, and the swells of orchestral strings are a nice touch. But is it worthy of a reissue? I guess it's nice for Davies and Matthews to have their work remembered, but to apply the term "classic" to it, even in the broadest sense of the word, is more than a little misguided. Maybe, back in the mid-'90s, you could have sold me on Pavement recording "classic" underground albums. But someone has to learn that just because *Spin* gave your record a green light back in the day, it doesn't mean you get your star on the

Walk of Fame, or that you're worthy of a reissue with 11 bonus tracks and extensive liner notes. ★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

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Caroline Drury
Loving You, Loving Me
(Chelsea Bridge)
Me: She sure is hot!
You: Yeah, but how's her album?
Me: She sure is hot!

Soilent Green
Confrontation
(Relapse)
No, seriously:
How can "extreme metal" be
So fucking boring?

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Maritime
(4AD)
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Seeks schizophrenic pop for
Mutual pleasure

Indigo Girls
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NO NO NO NO NO!
Keep your lesbian mitts off
My sacred Clash songs

Twisted Sister
Live at Wacken (The Reunion)
(Eagle Vision)
All the old "classics"
Played by wrinkled old dudes with
Great big man-boobies *

* Note: Unfortunately, a more in-depth review of this album cannot be given at this time, as less than two minutes into the first song, the disc exploded into a thousand pieces, filling the interior of my computer with tiny fragments and silver dust, not unlike the crap that flew into the air every time the drummer hit his snare drum in the "We're Not Gonna Take It" video. Circle of life, blah blah blah.

Sabah Story

Cross-cultural Arab-Canuck romance is *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* in hijabs

By COLLEEN ADDISON

Sabah (Asmida Khanjian), a 40-year-old Arab woman living in Toronto, is taking a break from her draining day job doting on her aged mother (Setta Keshishian) and decides to sneak into a nearby swimming pool. There, she spots Stephen (Shawn Doyle), his white skin gleaming sexily in a bright

bathing suit. An exchange of towels, a shy smile or two and Western Stephen is instantly smitten, the two giggling together despite Muslim mishaps over Sabah's favourite dish of overly ketchupued fries.... Yep, it's *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* all done up in hijabs. But it is fun, if a little repetitive, to see *Sabah*, a new Canadian film written and directed by Ruba Nadda, and its take on the culture clash-bash, complete with belly-dancing and burqas.

And the side characters are certainly a distinct improvement. Instead of caricatures spouting false Greek accents, there's Sabah's controlling eldest brother Majid (Jeff Seymour), so exhausted from the



stress of his self-appointed position as family provider that he can't see his assistance isn't wanted. (Though the ending—"Would you mind looking over these accounts for me, Sabah?" "My pleasure, Majid."—is groaningly pat.) Sabah's niece Souhaire (Fadia Nadda) is another highlight, showing her hair and shaking sequined dresses as a Modern Arab Woman, only to fall for Muslim Mustapha (David Alpay), earmarked by Majid to be her husband. It's interesting, too, that Sabah's family has already begun to "bend the rules," as Sabah informs Stephen. When Sabah's sister Shaheera (Roula Said) leaves the dinner table for her evening prayers, the other women are admiring, but no one else stops eating.

But the Arab culture depicted in the film is far from the immovable monde of post-9/11 propaganda, where women are veiled and vilified until they're lower than bugs. Sure, it's not all freedom and fireworks for Sabah and her sisters. Sabah's scarf carefully protects her hair from view, lest it inflame a passing man with lust. But at the end, when Sabah et al. are dancing, it's a view of Arab

women together that we rarely see on the nightly *National*.

ON THE OTHER HAND, where is CBC's Arabia? Okay, talk of jihad doesn't exactly go with the *Romeo and Juliet* romance that is *Sabah*, but still. I'm not asking to see full-out camel-riding kamikaze fighters, but a few war-wise hints wouldn't go amiss. When *Sabah* speaks of Syria as her former home, the images that come to mind are hardly love and

REVUE FOREIGN

mint tea beside the mosques. The new perspective is nice, but the former one shouldn't be ignored.

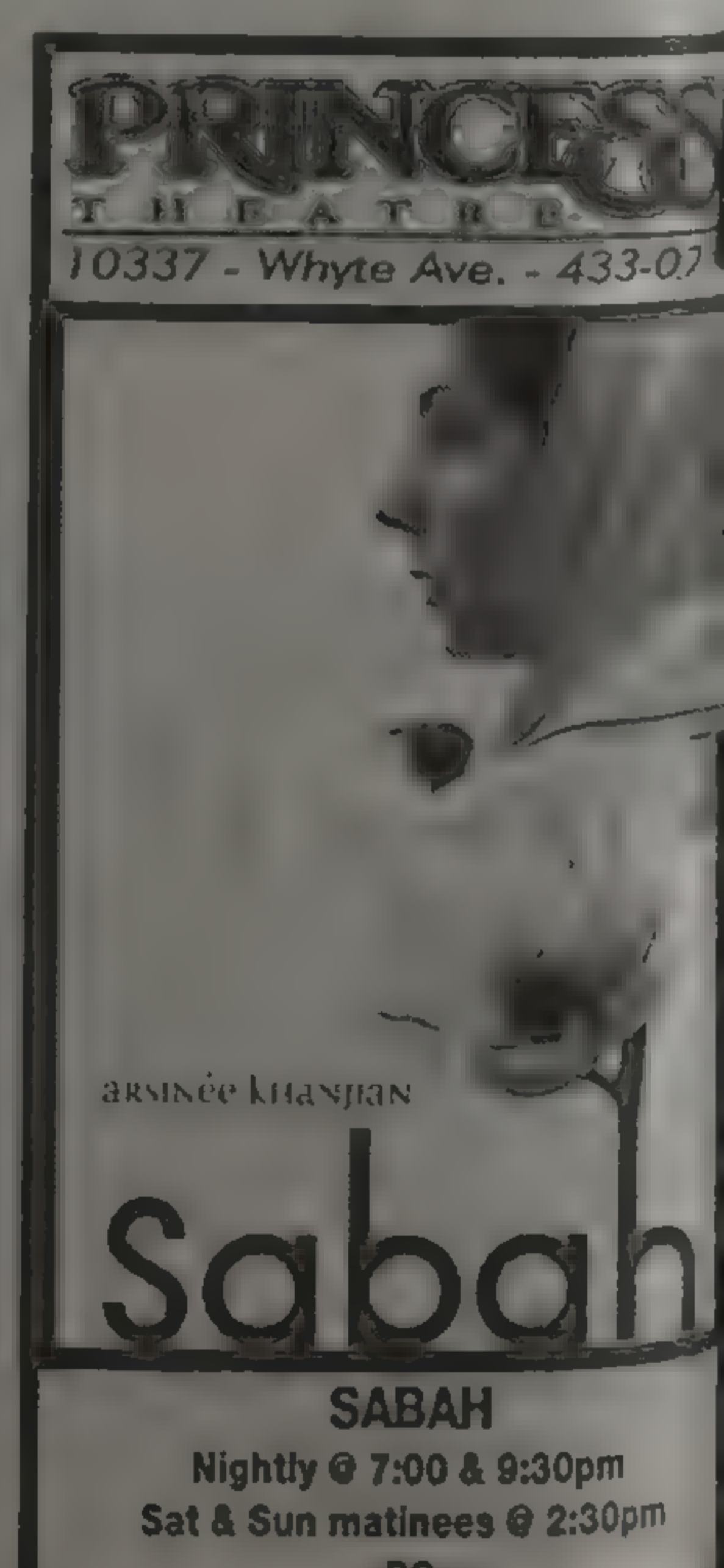
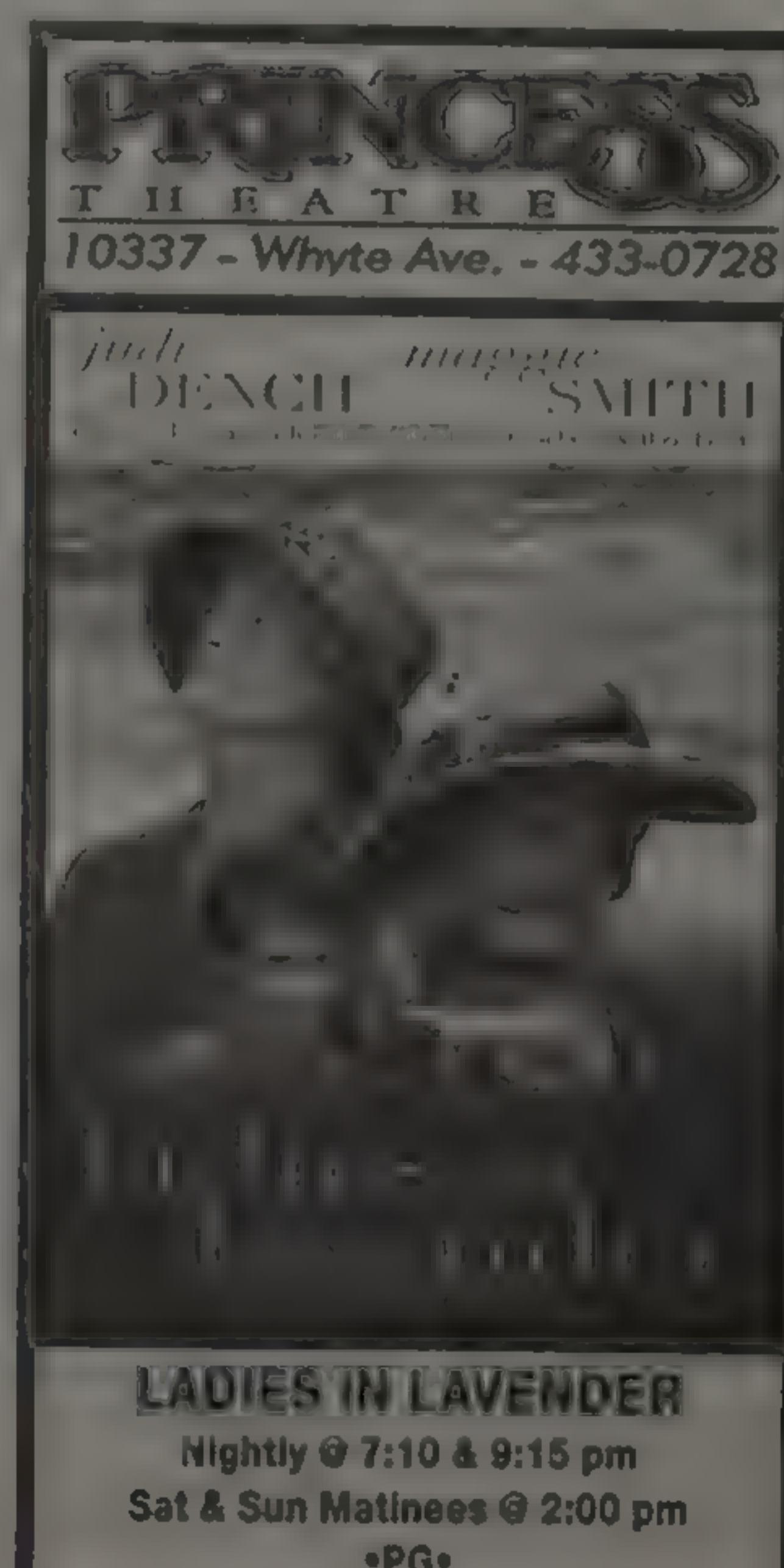
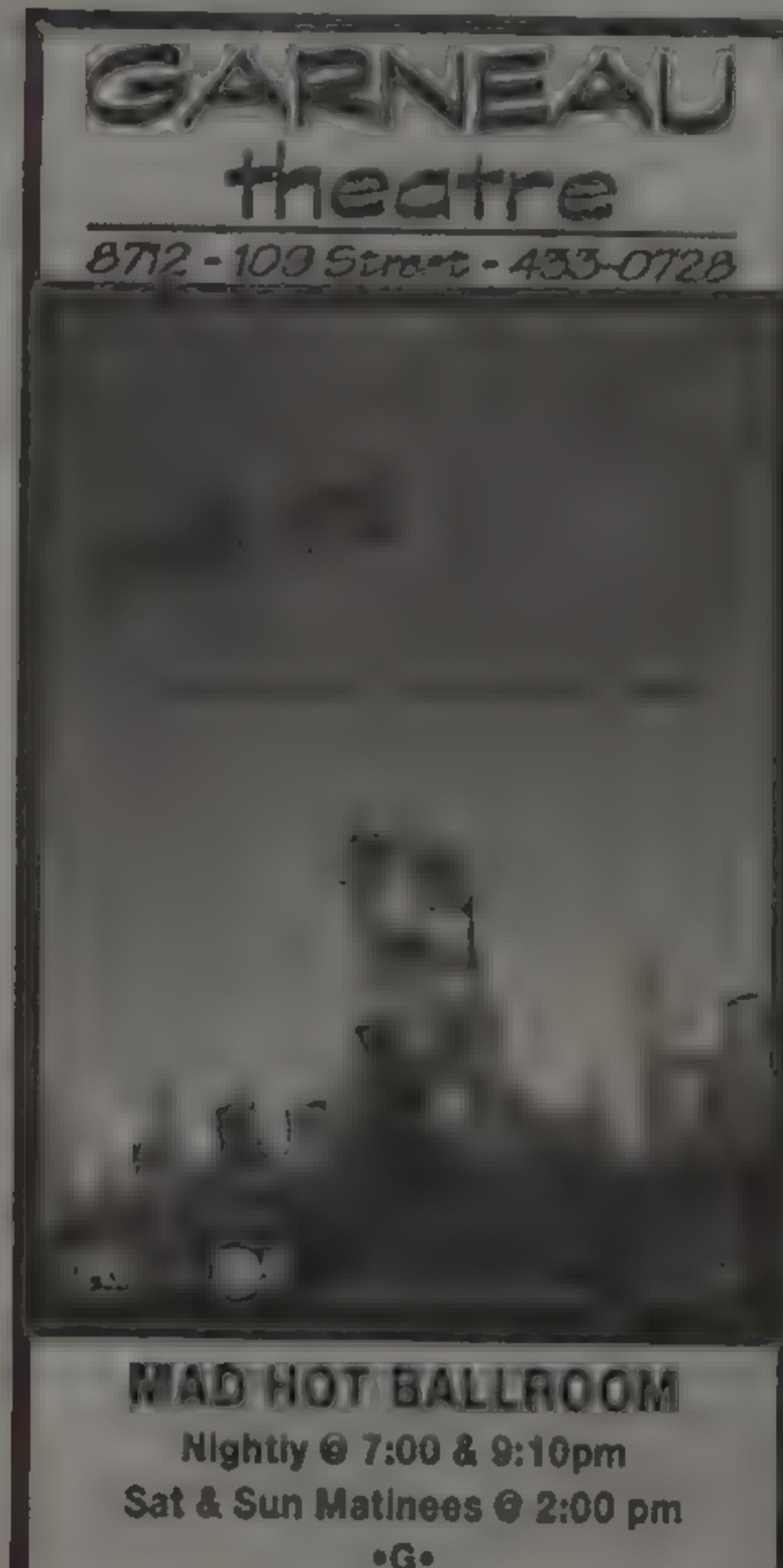
Plus, there's Stephen's utter lack of familial ties, bizarre in the face of Sabah's continued mom-worries. Sabah has to square things with her mother and siblings before she'll ever be happy, but Stephen's folks don't even get an e-mail. Nor do their names ever cross the man's lips: "I hail from Sudbury" is his only nod to that nasty background business. Now, I know that roots and tellies are key in the Muslim world, and it's

also true that masses of onscreen characters get a bit tiring. But not to say that we in the West aren't fully-formed from our fathers' heads.

But then again, nothing at
visible of us chesterfield-sitt
snowshoe-wearing, mickey-drin
Canucks. All those water-pipes,
nothing Canadian to balance it.
The film is set in Toronto,
wouldn't it have been fun to
Sabah riding a Ski-Doo? Or dribb
maple syrup over her Ara
makroud cookies? Instead, Stephen
only concession to the Canadian
lifestyle is opera-watching and
drinking a glass or two of red wine.
He could be Italian. Canada doesn't
have a culture, but you'd never
think it from watching *Sabah*.

All in all, though, *Sabah* is pretty fun, a happy cross-cultural romance that does what it's supposed to do: it doesn't make you think too much. And really, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* wasn't a bad movie. Why not see it again, Arab-style? **V**

SAB
*Written and directed by Ruba Nadda
Starring Arsinée Khanjian, Shawn Doyle
and Setta Keshishian • Opens Fri. July 1*



FILM LISTINGS

Showtimes for Friday, June 31 to Thursday, July 6

All showtimes are subject to change at any time.
Please contact theatre for confirmation.

CINEMA CITY 12/ MOVIES 12

Movies 12: 130 Ave. 50 St. 472-9779
Cinema 12: 3633-99 St. 463-5481

SIN CITY (R, gory violence throughout) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:15 1:45 4:25 7:00 9:45 Fri-Sat late show 12:15 Movies 12: 11:10 1:35 4:25 7:10 9:55 Fri-Sat late show 12:15

SAHARA (PG, violence) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:05 1:35 4:15 7:05 9:50 Fri-Sat late show 12:20 Movies 12: 10:55 1:30 4:20 7:05 9:50 Fri-Sat late show 12:15
KICKING AND SCREAMING (PG) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:20 1:30 4:30 7:00 9:20 Fri-Sat late show 11:30 Movies 12: Daily 11:25 1:50 4:50 7:00 9:40 Fri-Sat late show 11:50

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (PG) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:45 2:00 4:35 7:15 9:30 Fri-Sat late show 11:50 Movies 12: Daily 11:35 1:55 4:30 6:55 9:35 Sat late show 11:45

MONSTER-IN-LAW (PG, coarse language, not recommended for children) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:30 1:45 4:20 7:30 9:55 Fri-Sat late show 12:00 Movies 12: Daily 11:30 1:45 4:35 7:15 9:45 Fri-Sat late show 12:05

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (14A, gory violence) Cinema City 12: Daily 12:55 3:45 6:40 9:35 Movies 12: Daily 12:50 3:45 6:40 9:35

PAHELI (STC) Cinema City 12: Daily 1:05 3:50 6:45 9:40

XXX: STATE OF THE UNION (14A) Movies 12: Daily 11:05 1:40 4:40 7:30 9:55 Fri-Sat late show 12:10

UNLEASHED (18A, brutal violence) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:50 2:10 4:45 7:35 10:00 Fri-Sat late show 12:10 Movies 12: Daily 11:20 1:45 4:45 7:40 10:05 Fri-Sat late show 12:20

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (18A, gory violence, disturbing content) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:55 2:05 4:40 7:40 10:05 Fri-Sat late show 12:05 Movies 12: Daily 11:15 2:00 5:00 7:25 10:00 Fri-Sat late show 12:00

GUESS WHO (PG, coarse language) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:25 1:40 4:10 7:25 9:45 Fri-Sat late show 11:55 Movies 12: Daily 11:40 2:05 4:55 7:20 9:35 Fri-Sat late show 11:55

ROBOTS (G) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:10 1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:15 Fri-Sat late show 11:25 Movies 12: Daily 11:00 1:10 3:05 5:05 7:05 9:15 Fri-Sat late show 11:30

THE PACIFIER (PG) Cinema City 12: Daily 11:35 1:50 4:15 7:20 9:25 Fri-Sat late show 11:35 Movies 12: Daily 10:50 1:05 3:15 5:15 7:15 9:20 Fri-Sat late show 11:35

BEWITCHED (PG) Fri-Tue, Thu 11:10 4:10 7:30 10:20

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children, no passes) Daily 12:00 3:10 6:50 10:00

THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS (PG) 1:15 3:35 7:10 9:50

CRASH (14A, frequent coarse language, mature theme) 1:20 4:05 7:20 9:55

THE HONEYMOONERS (PG) Fri, Sat, Mon-Thu 1:05 3:30 6:30 Sun 1:05 6:30

LORDS OF DOGTOWN (14A) 1:25 4:05 6:45 9:30

THE INTERPRETER (14A) 1:20 4:35 6:45 9:30

HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE (PG) 12:55 3:35 6:50 9:25

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave., St. Albert.

DARK WATER (14A, frightening scenes) 11:10 1:20 3:25 5:30 7:40 9:45

HERBIE: FULLY LOADED (G) 11:30 1:30 5:30 7:30

BEWITCHED (PG) 3:30 9:30

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes) 12:40 2:55 5:15 7:30 9:50

MADAGASCAR (G) 11:15 1:15 3:15 5:15 7:15

BATMAN BEGINS (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children, no passes) 12:00 3:15 4:45 6:45 7:10 9:50 10:25

BATMAN BEGINS: THE IMAX EXPERIENCE (PG) 12:00 3:15 4:45 6:45 7:10 9:50 10:25

FANTASTIC FOUR (PG, not recommended for young children, no passes) 11:00 1:10 3:30 7:25 9:35

THE LONGEST YARD (14A, coarse language) 3:40 7:25 10:20

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON

111 Ave., Groat Rd., 455-8726

FANTASTIC FOUR (PG, not recommended for young children, no passes) Daily 12:00 1:30 2:00 2:45 3:45 4:45 5:20 6:30 7:15 8:45 9:15 10:00

DARK WATER (14A, frightening scenes) Daily 12:45 1:45 3:15 4:15 5:40 7:15 8:15 9:45 10:45

REBOUND (G) Daily 1:40 4:00

BEWITCHED (PG) Daily 1:20 3:50 6:45 9:20

LAND OF THE DEAD (18A, gory scenes, coarse language) Daily 5:30 8:00 10:40

HERBIE: FULLY LOADED (G) Daily 1:10 3:45 5:15 7:15

BATMAN BEGINS (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:10 3:45 5:15 7:15

THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS (PG) Daily 1:10 3:45 5:15 7:15

METRO CINEMA

9828-101A Ave., Citadel Theatre, 425-9212

LUCID DREAM with RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (STC) Thu only 7:00

TURTLES CAN FLY (STC) Fri-Mon 7:00

GUNNER PALACE (STC) Fri-Mon 9:00

NEW WEST MALL

8828-170 St., 444-1829

SIN CITY (R, gory violence throughout) Fri-Sun 1:30 4:00 6:40 9:20 Mon-Thu 4:00 6:40 9:20

KICKING AND SCREAMING (PG) Fri-Sun 1:45 4:40 6:50 9:00 Mon-Thu 4:40 6:50 9:00

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (PG) Fri-Sun 1:35 4:10 7:00 9:35 Mon-Thu 4:10 7:00 9:35

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (14A, gory violence) Fri-Sun 2:20 6:30 9:30 Mon-Thu 6:30 9:30

MINDHUNTERS (18A, gory violence) Fri-Sun 4:10 7:00 9:30

HOUSE OF WAX (18A, gory violence) Fri-Sun 4:15 7:30 9:30 Mon-Thu 4:15 7:30 9:30

XXX: STATE OF THE UNION (14A) Daily 9:10

A LOT LIKE LOVE (PG, sexually suggestive scenes, not recommended for children) Fri-Sun 2:10 4:50 7:00 Mon-Thu 4:50 7:25

ROBOTS (G) Fri-Sun 2:00 4:20 7:10 Mon-Thu 4:20 7:10

UNLEASHED (18A, brutal violence) Fri-Sun 1:50 4:30 7:20 9:40 Mon-Thu 4:30 7:20 9:40

WETASKIWIN CINEMAS

111 Ave., Groat Rd., 455-8726

FANTASTIC FOUR (PG, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:10 3:10 5:15 7:15 9:30

MADAGASCAR (G) Daily 1:00 3:25 7:00 9:25

WAR OF THE WORLDS (14A, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:10 3:10 5:15 7:15 9:30

CINDERELLA MAN (PG) Nightly 6:50 9:30

THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS (PG) Daily 1:00 3:25 7:00 9:25

Connelly—why is so hard for the characters she's been playing to come to terms with? In *Dark Water* (a remake of Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Ring*), Jennifer Connelly plays a woman who moves into a new apartment with her young daughter. She's up to her neck in mysterious noises, leaking walls and bizarre visions. She's surrounded by her own house and her husband's crazyhouse. Okay, maybe the house weren't a problem with Connelly's houses so much as they were a problem for mentally unstable lovers, but even so, her future co-workers may want to invest in some home insurance before fully committing to *Dark Water*.

FILM WEEKLY THIS WEEK'S NEW MOVIES

Buddy Nicolai Cleve Broch, Aksel Hennie and Anders Baasmo Christiansen star in director Morten Tyldum's heartwarming comedy about an unemployed billboard hanger who achieves unwelcome fame and notoriety when his quirky video diaries fall into the hands of an amoral reality-TV producer. In Norwegian with English subtitles. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel*; Wed, July 13 (7pm)

Dark Water Jennifer Connelly, John C. Reilly, Tim Roth and Dougray Scott star in *The Motorcycle Diaries* director Walter Salles's soggy supernatural thriller about a newly divorced woman who moves with her young daughter into a new apartment where she is plagued by mysterious noises, leaking walls and bizarre visions. Based on the novel by *Ring* novelist Koji Suzuki and the film by *Ring* director Hideo Nakata.

Fantastic Four Michael Chiklis, Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans and Julian McMahon star in *Barbershop* director Tim Story's film version of the Marvel comic book about a team of astronauts who acquire extraordinary superpowers after being zapped by cosmic rays, and who must use them to defeat the evil plans of the archvillain Dr. Doom.

Gunner Palace Directors Mike Tucker and Petra Epperlein's documentary, shot in 2003, in which a group of American soldiers share their candid opinions about military life and the invasion of Iraq while occupying the bombed-out Baghdad palace of Uday Hussein. Read Brian Gibson's article on page 7. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel*; Fri-Mon, July 8-11 (9pm)

Kiss Me Kate Howard Keel, Kathryn Grayson and Ann Miller star in *Show Boat* director George Sidney's rousing 1953 film version of Cole Porter's classic Broadway musical about a pair of husband-and-wife stage stars who bicker offstage as well as onstage during a tumultuous performance of a musical version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. *Provincial Museum Auditorium* 102 Ave and 128 St; Mon, July 11 (8pm)

Raiders of the Lost Ark Harrison Ford and Karen Allen star in Steven Spielberg's 1981 blockbuster in which globe-hopping archaeologist Indiana Jones braves snakes, scimitars and gigantic boulders as he tries to prevent the Ark of the Covenant from falling into the hands of the Nazis. Screening with local writer/director Kern Goretzky's short film *Lucid Dream*. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel*; Thu, July 7 (7pm)

Sabah Arsinée Khanjian, Shawn Doyle and Fadia Nadda star in writer/director Ruba Nadda's cross-cultural romance about a 40-year-old Arab woman living in Toronto who risks alienating her family when she embarks on a whirlwind romance with a white man. Read Colleen Addison's review on page 54.

Turtles Can Fly Olivier Gourmet, Morgan Marren and Soran Ebrahim star in *A Time for Drunken Horses* director Bahman Ghobadi's humanitarian drama about three young orphans who arrive in a village in Iraqi Kurdistan where the inhabitants are desperate for news about the impending arrival of the invading American army. In Kurdish with English subtitles. Read Josef Braun's review on page 56. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel*; Fri-Mon, July 8-11 (7pm)



Surviving heavy shelling

Turtles Can Fly mines Kurdish refugee camp setting for perseverance, not pity

BY JOSEF BRAUN

Maimed children eagerly scavenge hillsides for mines, crowds of rural Muslims watch Western music videos and wait in desperate anticipation for the mira-

cle of an American invasion, a pre-teen rides a flamboyantly decorated bicycle through an utterly impoverished refugee camp, an armless boy dismantles a landmine with his mouth, a very young mother is anxious to see her infant child meet a swift death, an artillery graveyard full of empty shell casings holds within it the tranquillity of a bucolic lumberyard, and everywhere the camera takes us, little kids and teenagers have taken control of the social order while adults look on helplessly.

One of the most unnerving ele-

ments of Bahman Ghobadi's *Turtles Can Fly* is the manner in which each aspect of its milieu seems incongruous when you see it intermingling with the whole, the way

REVUE FOREIGN

narratives and characters ripped right out of contemporary life seem allegorical, and the way the expectations we bring regarding what a film can tell us about turmoil in the Middle East are turned on their head by the mere fact that Ghobadi is an Iranian

Kurdish filmmaker working without any clear political agenda. Or at least, any agenda outside of reflecting back to us aspects of reality that, when they're acknowledged at all, are generally relegated to the margins of mainstream news coverage.

Turtles Can Fly takes place in the ramshackle Kurdish camps along the northern enclaves of Iraq as the country awaits the arrival of their ostensible liberators. No one seems to be in charge anywhere, no adult anyway, but a very confident, bossy, talented and bespectacled 13-year-old who calls himself Satellite (Soran Ebrahim) has managed to organize work gangs of children to collect undetonated landmines for resale. He's also facilitated the reception of foreign television broadcasts so that the community's baffled elders can look on in the vain hope for updates on the increasingly tense international situation. No one speaks or understands much English, though Satellite gives it a shot. Watching coverage of the buildup on CNN, he tells the others, "It's going to rain."

THE CHILDREN OF *Turtles Can Fly* are essentially abandoned, but neither they nor Ghobadi are soliciting pity from anyone. Short memories make for greater adaptability amidst such chaos, though at least one of Ghobadi's underage protagonists has already built up enough bad memories for a lifetime, memories that have infected her with a destructive impulse that terrifies her siblings but seems to endear her to Satellite, who makes multiple gestures to woo her

in between his near-constant calls of duty. "I have been looking for a girl like you for many years," he tells her before stripping down to his tight whities to catch her a fish in a murky pond. Whether monitoring the madness of the camps or capturing all-too-fleeting moments of mirth, Ghobadi is consistently—actually—sober in his approach to the material at hand, using the same level gaze he displayed in *A Time for Drunken Horses*, the film that gained him international recognition. His balance of unsentimental, documentary-like aesthetics with subtle poetry and mounting drama give *Turtles Can Fly* a lasting power beyond its initial shock and pathos.

The casting of non-actors—usually children—in Iranian films is often remarkable for the singularity and realism they bring to each individual piece, those unique faces and voices that seem to exist only in these little private stories so far from the iconography of movie stars. But the charismatic lead of *Turtles Can Fly* makes an impression that extends beyond the world of the film itself. Ebrahim's Satellite is such a richly embodied character, with such a peculiar sort of swagger, I have no doubt this kid will be playing a hard-drinking foreign correspondent in war-torn El Salvador in no time. ☀

TURTLES CAN FLY

Written and directed by Bahman Ghobadi • Starring Soran Ebrahim, Avaz Latif and Saddam Hossein Feysal • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, July 8-11 (7pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212

The world turned upside-down

6ixtynin9 confirms Pen-Ek Ratanaruang as one of the world's great undiscovered directors

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

About four months ago, my colleague Josef Braun reviewed *Last Life in the Universe*, the most recent film by a Thai director named Pen-Ek Ratanaruang. He called it one of the best films of the year, and I heartily agree with him—if you crossed Wong Kar-Wai's *In the Mood for Love* with *The Odd Couple* and threw in a yakuza subplot for good measure, you'd get *Last Life in the Universe*, one of the strangest, tenderest, most unpredictable and winning love stories I've seen in years. Since then, Ratanaruang's 1999 film *6ixtynin9* has also been released in North America on DVD; it's a much more conventional and accessible movie than *Last Life*, and it's so effortlessly funny and entertaining that I'm not surprised that an American remake of *6ixtynin9* is apparently in the works right now. (Of course, the fact that the guy who made *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* will be directing it does not exactly fill me with confidence.)

Ratanaruang's film begins with

Tum (Thai soap star Lalita Panyopas), a depressed young woman newly laid off from her job at a finance company, answering a knock at her door and finding a noodle box containing \$25,000 in cash sitting on the floor in front of her. The money turns out to be a payoff to a Thai gangster from a crooked boxing promoter, mistakenly delivered to Tum's apartment when the number "6" on her door comes loose and turns into a "9." When the bagmen force their way into Tum's apartment demanding she return the money, Tum manages, almost accidentally, to kill them instead. Too

REVUE DVD

scared to call the police, Tum decides to hide the bodies and make plans to abscond to England, but fate keeps conspiring against her—not only does Tum eventually wind up with four corpses littering her tiny Bangkok apartment, but her flighty best friend has attempted suicide, her nosy downstairs neighbour has become convinced that she's having an affair with her boyfriend and two sets of gangsters suspect her of stealing from them.

THAT SYNOPSIS probably makes *6ixtynin9* sound like every other "quirky" indie black comedy of the past 10 years—believe me, until I saw

this film, I thought I could die happily without ever watching yet another scene of someone frantically mopping up the blood from a murder scene or trying to nonchalantly distract someone so that they don't notice the corpse's leg dangling out of its hiding place. So why does *6ixtynin9* feel so fresh and funny? Maybe it's the fact that Ratanaruang's direction barely acknowledges that the film is a comedy—instead of the wacky music and the extreme close-ups and the frenzied pace that most American filmmakers bring to films of this genre, Ratanaruang's direction is placid, hushed, almost meditative. (It's like a Zen farce.) There's a gravity to even the film's most ridiculous inventions, as when a hitman assigned to kill Tum hears a song on her car stereo and immediately bursts into tears because it reminds him of his dead mother. Panyopas's wonderfully deadpan performance is perhaps the film's biggest asset—I love the way Tum never loses her cool, no matter how insane her situation becomes. And it's not like she's some kind of badass chick; she's simply a woman who's desperate and resourceful enough to handle whatever comes her way. When that hitman starts crying, she punches him in the face, grabs his gun and shoots him dead. She never breaks a sweat, and neither does Ratanaruang.

If you've seen *Last Life in the Uni-*



verse, you'll be amused by the way the two films start the same way (with a suicidal main character killing a couple of gangsters and then hiding the bodies in their apartment), only to veer off in wildly different directions. *6ixtynin9* is all about dozens of zany, violent character collisions (and it concludes with an even more elaborate Mexican standoff than the one in *Reservoir Dogs*), but *Last Life* is about two characters who don't collide so much as gently graze each other and then drift apart. And yet the two films both end the same way after all, with the main character making a surprisingly moving act of self-sacrifice.

Whatever happens with the *6ixtynin9* remake, I think it's only a matter of time before Ratanaruang breaks through in a big, big way with Western audiences. His wry sense of humour, his playful, carefree attitude toward life and love and his eye for beautiful leading ladies can't be beat, and I can't wait for his other two features, *Fun Bar Karaoke* and *Monrak Transistor*, to show up on DVD as well. ☀

6IXTYNIN9

Written and directed by Pen-Ek Ratanaruang • Starring Lalita Panyopas • Now on DVD

Ain't misbehavin'

Teatro la Quindicina
minds its manners
with farcical *Grand
Time in the Rapids*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

"Good manners have much to do with emotions," etiquette expert Amy Vanderbilt once observed. "To make them ring true, one must feel them, not merely exhibit them."

The same might be said of good acting, and three of Edmonton's best actors—Ron Pederson, Jeff Haslam and Belinda Cornish—are opening this week in *A Grand Time in the Rapids*, Stewart Lemoine's head-spinning new farce about a widow, her boyfriend and the well-meaning etiquette columnist who drives himself nearly frantic trying to preserve an air of decorum as their relationship unravels. As we all huddle around a small table at a Whyte Avenue Starbucks, the cast describes the play's tone to me. "It's a farce, but not a sex farce," Haslam explains. "It's pauses, then adds, "Although we do end up in towels."

"We actually spent a lot of time figuring out the difference between a screwball and a farce," Pederson says. "In Stewart's screwballs, there's always a character who is kind of the puppetmaster and creates the problems and fixes the problems and nobody else is really in on it. Here it's the opposite—the people in the audience are really the only ones who are in on everything."

"Right," agrees Cornish, who's making her Teatro la Quindicina debut with this production. "In the screwball, there's a main character who's kind of like Bugs Bunny and knows everything and engineers all these machinations just as a lark, because they enjoy watching everyone get confused and worried. And in the farce, there's usually one character who knows *nothing*, and kind of happily breezes through the play

unaware of how hard everyone else is working to keep them ignorant of what's going on."

"And here," Haslam adds, "you have these characters who are so obsessed with etiquette and who are trying to maintain the social proprieties for as long as they possibly can in the face of it all. That's the beauty of it for the audience, I think: watching that elastic band get stretched tighter and tighter and tighter until it finally snaps."

FORGET ABOUT their characters for a moment, though: are actors generally well-mannered in their everyday lives? Not particularly, Haslam says—and certainly not by the impossibly high standards of the aforemen-

so forthwith."

Those formal, old-fashioned and slightly artificial turns of phrase have become so identified with Lemoine's writing, in fact, that many actors assume that the only "trick" to performing his plays is to affect a glib 1940s cadence and leave it at that. They couldn't be more wrong, says Haslam, who ought to know how to handle Lemoine's dialogue better than anyone. "I really try to go back to neutral at the first reading," he says. "Back to zero, back to nothing, and then build the character up from there. Actually, I do that with every play—not just with Stewart, but with Doug Curtis, with Ron Chambers."

"You'll prevent yourself from being believable," Cornish agrees. "It might be funny, but it won't feel real."

"The characters have to be real people," Pederson says. "And it's different every time—it's not as if there's some kind of 'approach to Lemoine,' because with each new script, you really never know what you're going to get."

And Pederson says that's what's kept him coming back to Edmonton the last three years in a row to do a Teatro show instead of staying in Los Angeles and trying to parlay his fame as a cast member of *Mad TV* into more sketch comedy gigs. "Theatre is really what I want to do," he says. "Or at least, *acting* is what I really want to do, and sketch comedy doesn't really require so much of that. Sketch comedy is more on the surface, it's about giving the flavour of something—it's 'sketching,' you know? So the actor in me isn't completely satisfied by that."

Then, polite to the last, Pederson offers the medium an olive branch. "It's nothing against TV, though," he says. "I mean, I'd love to be a guy in an interrogation room on *CSI: Miami* going, 'I don't know! I found her like that, man!'"

A GRAND TIME IN THE RAPIDS
Written and directed by Stewart Lemoine •
Starring Belinda Cornish, Jeff Haslam and
Ron Pederson • Varscona Theatre • July 7-
23 • 420-1757/433-3399 (box #2)



Loco for yo-yo

Street performers John and Rebecca Higby get tangled up in the ol' up 'n' down

BY CAROLYN NIKODYM

When Rebecca Higby first met her husband John at the toy store she was working at in Denver five years ago, she didn't know how to Walk the Dog or Rock the Baby. She had never used a yo-yo when she was growing up. Back then, she had no way of knowing how much the yo-yo, perhaps the world's oldest toy, would enthral her. But John was a member of the toy store's yo-yo club and a yo-yo professional who had been performing yo-yo shows at festivals around the continent for six years already—and he had yo-yos everywhere. Naturally, as her affinity for him grew, so did her appreciation for the yo-yo.

"John was definitely the yo-yo master first," she says from their home in Boston. "Before I met him, I didn't know how to do anything. I couldn't even yo-yo five years ago." However, it wasn't long before Rebecca, 28, was incorporated into John's show, for a few tentative minutes at first, but eventually improving her skills to the point where now she can hula hoop and yo-yo at the same time (which is kind of like patting your head while rubbing your tummy, only harder). The couple, dubbed the Yo-Yo People, has performed at festivals in North America and far-flung places like Japan and Australia and now the 21st Annual Edmonton International Street Performers Festival.

John got his first yo-yo from his grandfather when he was 10. It had a couple decades' worth of attic dust on it, but the old 1962 Duncan was still in the package. Although he learned the three basic tricks quickly, he thought that was all a yo-yo could do. It wasn't until he was in his mid-teens that he realized that there were countless tricks to learn.

"He started meeting other yo-yo people and just going to yo-yo contests, and slowly he started picking up other tricks," Rebecca says. "In high school, he just started doing

really small demonstrations for a group of 10 people, and it slowly grew from there." By the time John was 19, he had a full comedic yo-yo routine that evolved over the next 11 years to include yo-yos with 10-foot strings and the psych maneuver—where he can come within inches of someone's head with the yo-yo.

"Neither one of us has ever gotten any formal training," she says. "It's just from hanging out with other yo-yo-ers. There's a whole online community, definitely. We're all connected to them that way now. There's the National Yo-Yo Contest in the U.S., in California, every fall. And there's the World's in Florida in the summer. There's all kinds of little yo-yo contests. And there's a yo-yo web board, so everybody knows what is going on."

WHILE YO-YOS HAVE BEEN good to John and Rebecca (they even shot a Volkswagen commercial last month), one cannot live by yo-yo alone. In the cold winter, the couple focuses on their more reclusive work—art.

While Rebecca paints and designs webpages, John hand-paints yo-yos, and just about any other surface he can get his brush on, with original, cartoon-like characters in bright colours. When they bought their first car together, John wanted to

paint that with his trademark yo-yo playing "Mr. Yodel," but Rebecca didn't quite agree. So they went out and got some large magnetic sheets from the art store to attach to the car and painted them instead. They ended up giving Rebecca's mom a large daisy to put on her blue Beetle, and one thing led to another.

"The next thing you know, everybody's asking where she got it, and then she's selling them out of the trunk of her car," Rebecca says. "So we make magnets for cars now, and we have an online store. That's like our introverted job. We have our extroverted job performing, and then otherwise we're hunched over a table, painting."

BUSKERS

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21ST ANNUAL EDMONTON
INTERNATIONAL STREET
PERFORMERS FESTIVAL

Sir Winston Churchill Square and Stanley
A. Milner Library Theatre • July 8-17 •
425-5162

The last of his species

Late sculptor Garry Williams's nature-loving spirit lives on in *Atavism* exhibition

BY AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

I didn't know sculptor and ceramist Garry Williams personally, but like thousands of other Edmontonians and Calgarians I feel that I knew him through the numerous shows and public commissions that he created over the brief 49 years of his life. His art speaks to us of a man filled with humour, sympathy for the land and a child-like joy for working with his hands. Those very qualities made his art so accessible, and so memorable. Williams created art for the people, *all* people, not just artistic elites. In fact, even if his name doesn't ring a bell with you, his work has probably made you smile as you walked right over it while shopping in downtown Calgary—it was Williams who created the 500 sculpted manhole covers that have become something of a symbol of Calgary. (The city is also planning to use the image on lapel pins, coasters and other souvenirs.)

Now, only three months after his untimely death from cancer, Edmonton is hosting an exhibition of William's ceramic sculptures, entitled *Atavism*. This show, which was displayed at the Bank of Montreal as part of the Works festival, is his latest work; he created it while already ill. Despite the strain and the bouts of weariness

that he experienced, this show—no less than any of his life's work—conveys a spirit of playful joy and profound knowledge that there is plenty to cherish in the world around us.

Williams loved a great deal in life, but his greatest, most enduring passion was for nature. That's what he went back to time and time again in life and in his art. "He was very connected to nature," explains his wife, Jan Williams. "He spent a lot of his teenage years camping. It was his favourite thing to do." Williams felt that nature was a universal subject: from a child to an art expert to an accountant, anyone and everyone loves nature. "Ani-

VIEW VISUAL ARTS

mal imagery is common to all people," Jan explains. "Not only was he fond of it but he felt that all other people would connect with it as well."

William's earliest art often contrasted natural and man-made objects. For example, in one witty and whimsical installation, he collected beehives, covered the ends with wax and inserted running razors inside. "The razors would come on and off so you could hear this strange buzzing from all of these hives," recalls Will Truchon, the curator of *Atavism* and a longtime admirer of William's work.

AS TRUCHON AND JAN DESCRIBE other nature-inspired projects that Williams created over the years, it's difficult not to

laugh. It isn't that Williams' oeuvre lacks depth, or that he was ignorant of the politics surrounding wildlife preservation; it's just that his art reaches us through laughter and gentle affection, not solemn dissertations on the state of environmental degradation. "He was never afraid of making a fool of himself to get other people to laugh," relates Jan affectionately. "He had a wonderful sense of humour. He liked to engage people."

And his art brought thousands of smiles to people's faces. Take "Rabbit Rise," one of his best-loved works. "You come around the bend in a community park [in Calgary] and as you come around the corner it looks as if you startled three rabbits. They're about three feet high," says Jan, noting that a private donor commissioned the piece. "This is a park she walks through all the time. It's a wonderful gift to the community."

In *Atavism*, Williams decided to send a more sobering message by depicting some of Alberta's most endangered species, including a swift fox and a peregrine falcon. "He felt that they were endangered and he was endangered too," explains his friend and former student Dawn Saunders Dahl. But in the midst of this serious message, the old smile that Williams's life and art is known for shines through. There is no doubt that the hand that modeled these animals enjoyed every moment of the strenuous labour. "The work that is up he created when he was sick," Jan says. "He was working up to a week before he died. That's where he was happiest." □

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theatre notes

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

gay trippers

Young theatrical entrepreneurs converge in Edmonton this week, both them presenting plays on gay themes: Jay Whitehead is the man behind a new touring production of Gilbert's landmark 1985 play *Drag Queens on Trial*, which plays at the Roost until July 12; meanwhile, Christopher Grignard brings his own *The Orchard Drive* to the Walterdale Theatre from July 12-16. Both are more or less financing the plays out of their own pockets—I would suggest that they get together for a couple of beers and share war stories, but I don't know if the cost of drinks will fit into their budgets.

"All I can say is, 'Thank God for line credit,'" laughs Grignard, who's currently pursuing a Ph.D. in drama and English at the University of Alberta. (His thesis analyzes Canadian gay playwrights' portrayals of their home towns.) "But this is something that I choose to be in debt for. It's something I believe in so much that the debt doesn't bother me.... There's nothing more frustrating than knowing you have a good play, but it's just sitting here at the bottom of a cabinet drawer."

I studied under Judith Thompson, and she always encourages her students to self-produce—sometimes you have to grab the reins and take ownership of your own work."

Grignard's play takes place in Kelowna in 1997, when mayor Walter Gray refused to pass the city's annual pride proclamation. (Gray eventually showed up in front of the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal for his actions, but it's hard to decide whether their decision was a victory or not for the gay community. The tribunal found Gray guilty of discrimination and issued a strongly worded reprimand, but he wasn't fined and he continues to serve as mayor of Kelowna to this day, only now he declines to sign proclamations of any kind, Pride or otherwise.) But the main reason of *The Orchard Drive* concerns our young gay actors facing their demons and dealing with their sexualities as they rehearse a production of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

"As an academic," Grignard says, "I'm always very critical of works that perpetuate stereotypes about the gay community. And so, I was very surprised as a playwright to find myself being there—one character in particular has a key moment where he talks about a bunch of homophobic guys trying to drown him when he was younger, and he connects that with his cruising trips. It's a very sensitive subject, and I really had to struggle with that inner voice saying, 'You can't do this, you're putting us back all these years with this character.' But I felt I

had to put it on the stage. It's a tough balance to maintain."

Whitehead had to overcome similar initial misgivings with Gilbert's script, the story of three drag queens who must defend their "unacceptable" lifestyle within a sort of stylized court of public opinion. "I'm not really a drag queen in my personal life," he says. "In fact, when I was growing up and coming out as a gay man in the '90s, I was one of those gay men who was always... not disgusted, but a little bit confused by the whole drag thing and didn't really understand why they had to be the ones to represent the entire gay community [in the eyes of the media]. But in doing this play, I really gained respect for them and came to think of drag as quite a beautiful thing. The play really speaks to that idea of being yourself and not being afraid to be true to what you feel inside. These are men who never really felt that they fit as men in their lives growing up, and I had to respect their bravery in not bowing down to social pressures and being who they are despite everything—especially out in this part of the country."

Edmonton is the first stop on the *Drag Queens on Trial* itinerary, which will eventually take Whitehead and the

There's nothing more frustrating than knowing you have a good play, but it's just sitting there at the bottom of a cabinet drawer.

rest of his troupe to Regina, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Calgary. Some of those gigs are at Fringe festivals, while some—like this week's stint at the Roost—are part of a bigger event and will probably require an extra publicity push. "We didn't even make the waiting list at the Edmonton Fringe," Whitehead says. "We were really disappointed—there's an energy and a buzz at the Fringe that's unlike anything else, and we almost gave up after that. But we started looking at other possible venues, and when the Roost offered to let us come in and do it for free, we realized that it would actually be a really good opportunity and we couldn't really lose."

Whitehead realizes that he may lose a large chunk of his potential audience by doing the play in a gay bar like the Roost—even some of the cast's family members hesitated to see the show there. "It's unfortunate," Whitehead says. "I mean, when we did a version of the show at the University of Lethbridge, it was the straight audience who was curious and came out and saw us more than the gay audience. But in the end, we really don't care about attracting any one kind of crowd; we're just aiming to break even and to share this piece that we all love to do. I mean, nobody does this kind of thing for the money."

Grignard agrees. "If you're involved in the arts," he says, "you know that the sense of pride you get when you have the opportunity to share your work is worth every penny. That's a feeling my academic work will never give me." ☺

ARTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to Glenys at listings@vneweekly.com. Deadline is Friday at 3pm

DANCE

EL AMOR BRUJO Timms Centre for the Arts, 112 St, 87 Ave (420-1757) • Flamenco presented by Alhambra Ensemble Espanol, choreography by Flavia Robles • Thu, July 7 (7:30pm) • \$25 (adv)/\$30 (door) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

FEATS FESTIVAL OF DANCE Various locations (422-8107) • Presented by the Alberta Dance Alliance, a multi-disciplinary dance festival including workshops, auditions, events, and a hip hop challenge • Until July 10 • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

FLAP: A FIELD GUIDE TO URBAN BIRDING Planet Ze, 10055-80 Ave (428-3499) • Annie Dugan, John Ulyatt, Anne Marie Felicitas, Trina Rasmussen, and Laurie Montemurro • July 8-9 (8pm), July 10 (2pm) • \$18 (adv)/\$15 (student/senior)/\$20 (door)

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10186-106 St (488-6611) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed all hols) • **Main Gallery:** • *HISTORY IN THE MAKING*: until Aug. 31 • *MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE*: Ceramic artworks by Shirley Rimer; until July 9 • *Discovery Gallery: THE MADELINES, WASTE-COATS*: Sculptural, felted artworks by Angelika Werth; until July 9 • *FINE LEGS, GREAT CHESTS, HOT SEATS*: Works by NAITs Advanced Wood Working and Design Graduates; July 14-Aug. 27 • *RETROSPECTIVE*: Quilts by Betty Louden; July 16-Aug. 27

ART BEAT GALLERY 26 St. Anne Street St. Albert (459-3679) • *THE ART BEAT*: with works by Simone McLeod and Laraine Weaver • July 7-31 (10-6 Tue, Wed & Fri, 10-8 Thu, 10-5 Sat)

ARTSHAB STUDIO GALLERY 3 Fl, 10217-106 St (439-9532/423-2966) • Open: Thu 5-8pm or by appointment • *GUN POWDER ON TIGERS' TEETH*: Paintings, photographs and artworks created by nine artists • Until July 28

BEARCLAW GALLERY 10403-124 St (482-1204) • Artworks by Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig, Roy Thomas, Jane Ash Poitras, George Littlechild, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Jim Logan, Maxine Noel, Aaron Paquette and others

BRUCE PEEL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY U of A Campus (492-7929) • Open: Mon-Fri 12-4:30pm • *PRESSING*: Canadian Poetry and Small Publishers, 1950-1980, including books and poetic objects • Until August

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 Ave (461-3427) • Jacques Martel's oils and acrylics, Jerry Berthelette's watercolours, acrylics and serigraphs, Theresa Mae Donaldson's oils and watercolours, Stephen Fouquet's acrylics and mixed media • July 8-20 • Reception July 8 (7:30-8pm)

CHACHKAS 8118-100 St (432-9444) • *MANEQUIN PERFECTIONISM*: Mixed media artworks by Lara Chauvin • Until July 31

CYBER CAFE 10354 Jasper Ave • *PIECES OF EIGHT*: A collision between sound and vision, a fundraiser for global visions • \$10 at the door • July 8

CHRISTL BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621-82 Ave (439-8210) • Open: Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • *2005 SUMMER DRAWING SHOW*: Drawings by Christl Bergstrom • Until Sept. 1

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • *5TH ALBERTA BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART*: Until Sept. 4 • *THE ROAD: CONSTRUCTING THE ALASKA HIGHWAY*: until Oct. 2 • *POPULACE AND PLACE*: Until Aug. 21 • *Children's Gallery: TIR-NA-NOG (FOREVER YOUNG)*: By Spider Yardley-Jones • \$9 (adult)/\$6 (student/senior)/\$3 (child 6-12)/free (member/child 5 and under)

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue by appt. only, Wed-Fri 10am-5:30pm, Sat 10am-4pm, closed long weekends • *COLLECTION 2005*: Rotating show of artists works

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY Extension Centre, 2nd Fl, 8303-112 St • Open: Mon-Fri (8am-4pm) • Laura Evans Reid—early student of Henry Glyde, a

Until July 27

FORT DOOR 10308-81 Ave (432-7535) • Open: Mon-Wed, Sat 10am-6pm, Thu-Fri 10am-9pm, Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo soapstone carvings, Inuk by C. Inukpuk, Eskimo and Indian silver and gold jewellery by J. McDougall

FRINGE GALLERY Bsmt 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Open: Mon-Sat 9:30-6pm • *THROUGH THE DARK SEA*: Installation by Sidsel Bradley and Agnieszka Matejko • Until July 30

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm

JEFF ALLEN ART GALLERY Strathcona Place Senior Centre, 10831 University Ave (433-5807) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • Paintings by Janet Cardinal • Until Aug. 4

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm, Sat 10am-5pm • Artworks by Dave Ripley, Isabel Levesque, Marilyn Rife, Waltraut Unbekannt-Lafleur and others • Through July

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Artworks by Waltraut Unbekannt-Lafleur, Al Roberge, watercolours by Jim Painter, prints by Tot • Through July

LITTLE CHURCH GALLERY 455 King St, Spruce Grove (962-0664) • *PLACES I'VE BEEN*: Artworks by Fran Mansell • Until July 30

MANDOLIN BOOKS AND COFFEE 6419-112 Ave (479-4050) • Photographs by Brad Burns • Until July 31

MCMULLEN GALLERY U of A Hospital, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • *INSIDE THE DRESS*: Artworks by nine women artists • Until July 10

METAC MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC ART GALLERY 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open: Mon-Sat 10am-4pm Sun 10am-6:30pm • *TERRAIN OF THE DOMESTIC*: Silkscreen prints by Bill Laing • Until July 28

NAKED CYBER CAFÉ 10354 Jasper Ave • *PIECES OF EIGHT ART SHOW* • July 8 (8pm)

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS Stollery Gallery, 9702-111 Ave (474-7611) • Open: Mon-Fri 10am-2:30pm • *L'ECLECTICA*: New artworks by artists from the Nina Haggerty Studio Collective • Until Aug. 26

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Perron Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Fri 12-5pm; Sat 2-6pm • Experimental pottery by Mindy Andrews, Robert Rippon and others; July 7-30 • ArtVentures: July 18; \$2/child • *HOT*: Experimental pottery by Mindy Andrews, Paul Bellermare, Judy Billard, Louis O'Coffey • July 7-30; opening reception/art walk: Thu, July 7 (6-9pm)

PYGMALION 12, 44 St. Thomas Street, St. Albert (460-1677) • Artworks by various artists, part of the Morgan family collection • July 7 (6-9pm)

REYNOLDS-ALBERTA MUSEUM Wetaskiwin (1-800-661-4726) • *LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MOTORCYCLE*: Featuring the origins of the motorcycle • Until Sept. 17, 2006

THE ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open Mon-Sun 9am-5pm • *SYN-CRUE CANADA ABORIGINAL PEOPLES GALLERY*: Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • *FROM HOOF PRINTS TO TANK TRACKS*: The South Alberta Light Horse Regiment's role during the first and second World Wars; until Sept. 18 • *ALBERTA CELEBRATES* • *Terrace: ALBERTA CENTENNIAL SCULPTURE EXHIBITION*: Sculptures by Andrew French, Ryan McCourt, Rob Willms; until Sept. 25

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • *LANDSCAPE GROUP SHOW*: Artworks by Maureen Harvey, Arlene Wasylchuk, Lynn Main, Gerald Faulder, Jacqueline Stethelin, Jim Stokes, Pat Service, and Jamie Morris • July 8-29

SNAP GALLERY 10309-97 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat (12-5pm) • *THE DIGITAL DISTILLERY*: Printworks by Andy Fabo; until July 16

ST. ALBERT ART WALK Downtown St. Albert (460-4310) • In the heart of St. Albert's Art District • July 7 (6-9pm)

THE STUDIO GALLERY *WIDE OPEN SPACES: RURAL LANDSCAPES*: Landscapes painted by Bruce Thompson 143 Grandin Park Plaza St. Albert (460-

5990) • Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-4pm • Until Aug 26

URBAN ROOTS SALON & GALLERY 10143-82 Ave - 2nd Floor (438-7978) • Featuring works of sculpture, photography, painting, and illustration • Opening reception July 7 • Show runs until August

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • *DIVERSITY II*: Membership show • Until July 16

VANDERLEELIE GALLERY 10183-112 St (452-0286) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm • Landscape paintings by Gregory Hardy, abstract paintings by Robert Christie • Until July 12

WALTERDALE ART IN THE LOBBY Walterdale Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave (475-2844) • Artworks by Ruby Golding • Until July 9

WORKS GALLERY Commerce Place, 10155-102 St (426-2122) • *THROUGH ALBERTA EYES*: Photographs by Orest Semchishen, curated by Gordon Snyder • Until Sept. 16

LITERARY

NAKED CYBER CAFÉ 10354 Jasper Ave • Music, poetry, and performance art open stage hosted by the Naked Eclectic Electric Orchestra • Every Thu (8pm)

LIVE COMEDY

BLUE CHICAGO 14203 Stony Plain Rd (451-1402) • Comedy open mic hosted by Kathleen McGee • Every Mon (9pm) • Free

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Thu 8:30pm, Fri 8:30pm, Sat 8pm and 10:30pm • Chris Molineux; July 7-9

THE COMIC STRIP 1646 Bourbon St, WEM, 882-170 St (483-5999) • Show times nightly at 8pm; weekends 8pm and 10:30pm • Kyle Grooms and special guests; July 7-10 • Silly Sundays for Kids; Sun, July 10 (12-1.45pm) • Get hypnotized; Tue, July 12

THEATRE IN THE PARK Winston Churchill Sq (425-5162/451-8000) • Women in Comedy; Sat, July 9 (8pm); \$15 (adv)/\$17 (door) • Late Night Madness; July 15-16 (10pm); \$12 (adv)/\$15 (door)

WUNDERBAR HOGBRAUHAUS 8120 101 St (436-2286) • The Lederhoosers Super Comedy Dryhump • Every Fri (8:30pm) • Free

YUK YUK'S KOMEDY KABARET Londonderry Mall (481-9857) • Darryl Lenox (Vancouver), Welby Santos & Kevin McGrath (Edmonton)

THEATRE

A CLOSER WALK WITH PATSY CLINE Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Inn, 1661 S-109 Ave (483-4051) • A musical biography of the legendary country star, from her days as a teen honkytonk singer to her triumphant appearances at the Grand Ole Opry • July 8-Sept. 5

DRAMAWORKS 2005 Citadel Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • Workshops include performance, design, playwriting, musical theatre, drama education, and directing • July 8-17 • For info call 1-888-422-8160

A GRAND TIME IN THE RAPIDS Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (433-3399, #2/420-1757) • Ron Pederson, Belinda Cornish and Jeff Haslam star in



free will astrology

BY ROB BREZSNY



May 21 - June 20

Professional basketball player Tim Duncan has a nickname that I invite you to take on for the next two weeks: the Big Fundamental. To live up to the daunting yet fun responsibility of that title, you'll have to put on your game face and get wa-a-a-a-ayyy down to basics. Banish distractions, purge the inessential and cut the crap. Give yourself with ferocious impeccability to the Three Things That Matter Most, and do it with a raging integrity that will scare away all the phonies, lazybones and ethically challenged mediocrities.



Apr 20 - May 20

When my Taurus daughter Zoe was seven years old, I detected signs that her natural inclination to be kind and gentle was beginning to slip into passive docility. I wondered whether I could or should do anything to nurture what astrologers call the Mars energy—the forceful, wilful aspect of her psyche. As an experiment, I had her throw baseballs as hard as she could against the side of the house. I bought her a punching bag and encouraged her to smash it. Seven years later, she's as kind and gentle as ever, but also has an indomitable strength and forceful grace. Her Mars force is fully awake. Did my experiments have anything to do with it?



June 21 - July 22

One of your lifelong projects is to learn the art of keeping proper boundaries. That doesn't always come easy for you. In your subconscious mind you're often thinking, "I can't figure out where I leave off and everyone else begins." Having sounded this warning, though, I'll now advise you to completely surrender to the urge to merge, at least temporarily. Blend, connect and commune with abandon. Write this declaration by sculptor Malvina Hoffman on your arm: "My true center is an enormous capacity for falling in love with everything around me."



July 23 - Aug 22

Since 1921, the official length of a marathon race held anywhere in the world has been

EVENTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to Glenys at listings@vneweekly.com. Deadline is Friday at 3pm.

CLUBS/LECTURES

BOREAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM 7, 6328A-104 St; every Thu (6:30-8:30) • Organic Roots, 8225-122 St • Every third Thu (6:30pm)

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONALS SPEAKERS Lister Hall, Corner 87 Ave 116 St • L.E.A.D. by example: Four ways to lead with Stress Resiliency and Positive Energy • CAPS members FREE, Guests \$35 • July 9 (8:30 am -12pm)

EDMONTON ECO-REDNECKS 10341 Whyte Ave (231-2977) • Environmental social and salon club meeting • Sun, July 17 (6pm)

LIVING POSITIVE www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Edmonton Persons Living with HIV Society • Every Tue (7pm): Peer-facilitated support groups • Daily drop-in, peer counseling

MEDITATION • Garneau United Place, 11148-84 Ave (412-1006) Drop-in meditation with Gen Kelsang Phuntsog; every Thu (7-9pm); \$10 (donation) • Diamond Way Buddhist Centre, 4th Fl, 10314 Whyte Ave (455-5488) free meditations every Wed (8pm) • City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave; The Way of Life meditation; last Tue each month (7pm door) • **Transmission** Meditation, Stilpoint Healing Centre, 10350-124 St (433-3342) every Tue, Thu, Sun (8-9:30pm); free

TOASTMASTERS • St. Paul's Church, 4005-115 Ave (476-6963) • Learn public speaking; every Thu (7-9pm) • Baker Centre, 10th Fl, 10025-106 St (477-2613) Upward Bound Toastmasters; every Wed (7pm) • University of Alberta, Business 1-23 (492-0910) Business and Beyond Toastmasters Club, practice and enhance your skills; every Monday (6:30 pm)

PUBLIC MEETING Riverdale Community League Hall, 9231-100 Ave • Meeting to discuss the proposed change for lands located South of 101 Ave and West of 87 St.

QUEER LISTINGS

AGAPE Faculty of Education, U of A Campus • Sex, sexual, gender differences in education and culture focus group • Contact Dr. Andre Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca) for info

AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the International organization of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

BIQUEER WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP biqqueer@yahoo.ca • Social group for bi-curious and bisexual

Just in case they did, try something similar, Taurus. In the most constructive way possible, feed your aggressiveness.



May 21 - June 20

A young goth woman was weaving her bicycle through heavy traffic. She was talking on a cellphone with her left hand and smoking a cigarette with her right. Watching from my Honda, I marveled at how well she maneuvered without the guiding influence of her hands on the handlebars. I stopped next to her at a red light, and was further impressed when she pulled out a candy bar and a small book of poems by Charles Baudelaire. For a minute or so, she smoked, ate, read and chatted on her phone. Just before the light changed, I leaned out the window and said, "You're not a Gemini, are you?" "Yeah," she replied. "Of course. How did you know?" I knew because not only are you the zodiac's best multitasker, you're also at the very peak of your ability to do five things at once.



June 21 - July 22

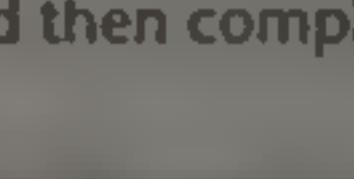
One of your lifelong projects is to learn the art of keeping proper boundaries. That doesn't always come easy for you. In your subconscious mind you're often thinking, "I can't figure out where I leave off and everyone else begins." Having sounded this warning, though, I'll now advise you to completely surrender to the urge to merge, at least temporarily. Blend, connect and commune with abandon. Write this declaration by sculptor Malvina Hoffman on your arm: "My true center is an enormous capacity for falling in love with everything around me."



July 23 - Aug 22

Since 1921, the official length of a marathon race held anywhere in the world has been

26.2 miles. Runners train for that specific distance. That's why many participants in this year's Lakeshore Marathon in Chicago were confused at the end of the race. Their times were surprisingly slow and they were more fatigued than they'd anticipated. It was only a few days later that marathon officials announced the course had been laid out mistakenly: There was an extra mile. I think you can expect an analogous development in your life, Leo. The finish line will be farther than you expected—maybe farther than is fair. Should you stop before the end and complain? Or should you complete the task and then complain? I'll leave that up to you.



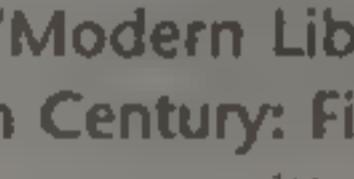
Aug 23 - Sept 22

For a time, my new book *Pronoia Is the Antidote for Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You With Blessings* was #12 on the bestseller list at Powells.com. Right behind it at #13 was James Howard Kunstler's *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century*. That snapshot of book buyers' schizophrenic inclinations has a resemblance to your outlook, Virgo. Half of you is overflowing with a talent for cultivating intelligent hope, while the other half is always preparing for the worst. Being as objective as an optimist like me can be, I firmly believe you should adjust the ratio. According to the astrological omens, the right approach is to be 90 per cent devoted to expecting the best and 10 per cent invested in guarding yourself against trouble.



Sect 23 - Oct 22

Seven years ago, Random House announced its "Modern Library 100 Best Books of the 20th Century: Fiction." In this collection, 91 texts were written in English by white males. I suppose there's a remote possibility that's an accurate inventory, though I doubt it. But



Oct 23 - Nov 21

whether it is or not, I feel it's critical to the health of our culture and even our planet that the best books of the 21st century will be authored by a far more diverse mix. And what, you may ask, does this have to do with your personal destiny in July 2005? The astrological omens say it's a perfect moment to decide what you'll do in the coming years to contribute to a world in which white men who speak English don't run everything. (P.S. This is crucial even if you yourself are an English-speaking white man.)



Nov 22 - Dec 21

At Tufts Educational Day Care in Somerville, Massachusetts, kids from ages three to five have to sign contracts guaranteeing their good behaviour. "I know how to listen to my teachers," they promise. "When my teachers talk to me, I will not scream, try to hit or say, 'You're not my boss.'" I'd like you to ask both your inner child and your inner teenager to make a similar vow right now, Scorpio. There are valuable teachers hovering in your vicinity. Some may have educational techniques that are less than adroit, but they all deserve your close, sincere and humble attention.



Jan 20 - Feb 18

Please repeat the following affirmation first articulated by poet Robert Frost: "I am not confused. I am just well-mixed." Say aloud at least 10 times a day for the next week. It will help you put a positive spin on certain events that might otherwise throw you off balance. Your next medicinal sound bite comes from playwright W.S. Gilbert: "I am rich in never-ending unrest." This one will encourage you to regard your turbulence as a creative gift, not a pathologic distraction.



Feb 19 - Mar 20

It's a hang-your-head-out-the-window-of-speeding-car-like-a-golden-retriever kind of week. You should make yourself as innocent and un-self-conscious as possible as you seek simple, intense pleasures, whether that's letting the wind rush over your face or soaping up the spray of a waterfall or getting a massage every single day or standing on the stage at a live concert so the raw music can surge through you. The object is to scour out your mind with vivid sensations allowing you to become as empty and fresh as possible. ♡



Dec 22 - Jan 19

Sometimes we have a strong sense of our destiny is calling us to do, but we don't feel quite ready or brave enough to answer the call. We need a push, an intervention, a serendipitous stroke—what I call fate bait, a person or event that awakens our dormant willpower and draws us inexorably toward our fate; it's a thunderbolt or siren song that stage whisper that gives us a good excuse to do what we know we should do. I expect that you, Capricorn, are about to meet your fate bait.



Jan 20 - Feb 18

Please repeat the following affirmation first articulated by poet Robert Frost: "I am not confused. I am just well-mixed." Say aloud at least 10 times a day for the next week. It will help you put a positive spin on certain events that might otherwise throw you off balance. Your next medicinal sound bite comes from playwright W.S. Gilbert: "I am rich in never-ending unrest." This one will encourage you to regard your turbulence as a creative gift, not a pathologic distraction.



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FRANCO'S 14059 Victoria Trail (478-4636) • Every Thu-Sat (9pm); Name that tune with Peter

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HILLVIEW PUB 311 Woodvale Rd. W, Millwoods (462-4680) • Every Fri-Sat (9:30-1am)

JIMMY RAY'S 15211-111 Ave (486-3390) • Every Fn (8:30pm); Name that tune

KELLY'S 11540 Jasper Ave (451-8825) • Every Sun/Wed

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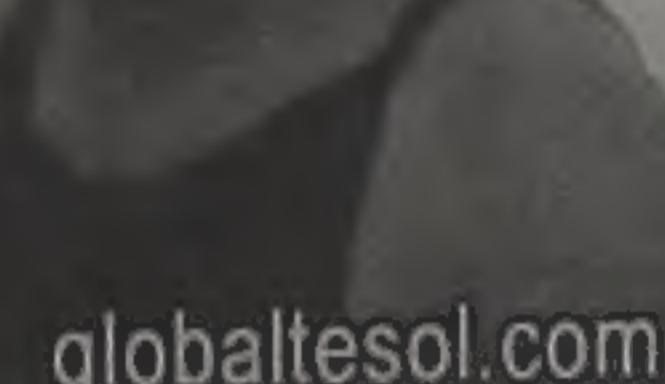
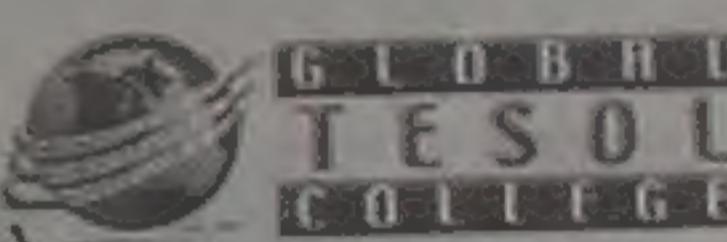
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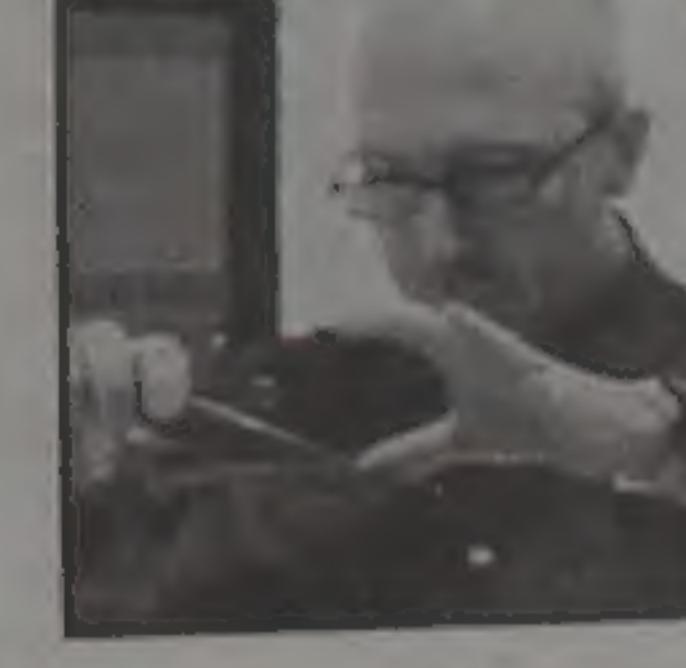
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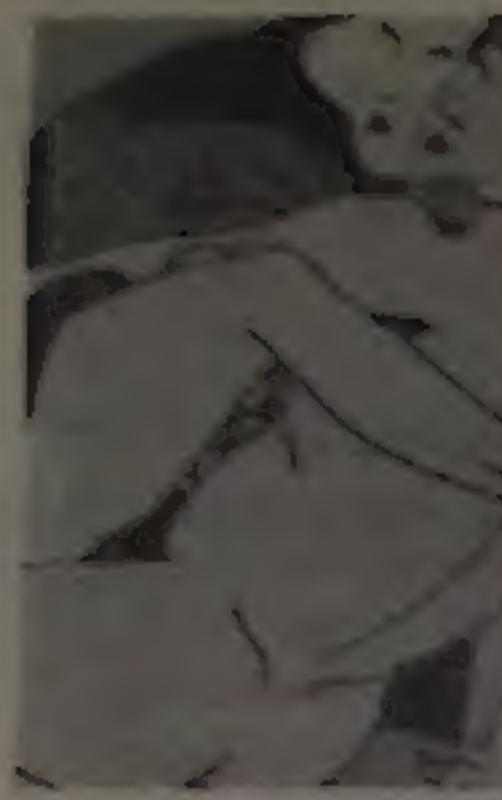
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alt sex column

BY ANDREA NEMERSON

This Just In

Dear Readers:

It was just last week that we were talking about new information forcing us to come up with a new theory, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable, right? That's how science works, and that's how we like it. That one was easy, though—it's been years since those of us who follow such things had to adjust to the new and less romantic understanding of female ejaculation. Big deal. The information about male circumcision and HIV prevention is newer and more controversial, but a new study described in the *Wall Street Journal* appears—I said “appears”! It still needs to be evaluated and replicated!—to prove that circumcision reduces the transmission rate of HIV by about 70 per cent.

That's huge. And discomforting.

The trial, involving more than 3,000 HIV-negative young men in a South African township, was very straightforward: half the men were circumcised, half left alone and everyone continued to have unprotected sex with women. The intention was to compare results after 21 months, but after a year the results were so significant (10 uncircumcised men contracted HIV for about every three circumcised men who did so) that the oversight board called the study off, as is common when the drug or other intervention being studied is so obviously effective that continuing the study would be unethical. (The ethical choice at this point is to offer treatment to everyone involved.)

You will have noticed that this study addressed only HIV transmission via heterosexual intercourse, the main route of transmission in Africa. Here in the West, of course, you're far more likely to contract it through sharing needles or, if you're a gay man, unprotected anal intercourse, so these studies (several more of which are underway in Kenya and Uganda) are only marginally applicable to AIDS prevention policy here at home, where the long-ballyhooed heterosexual AIDS epidemic is still supposed to hit any day now but is being awfully poky about it.

Here in the States, there's also a general sense that routine infant circumcision, having been declared “nontherapeutic” by the American Academy of Pediatrics, is on its way out.

Enlightened parents, citing female genital mutilation and touting “genital integrity,” fling themselves between their helpless infants and the heartless, scalpel-wielding medical establishment. Nobody circumcises anymore—it's just not done! The actual statistics, as compiled by the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/circumcisions/circumcisions.htm), do not bear this out—circumcision rates have remained relatively stable over the last 20 years or so. These are national figures, though, while most of the people writing and rallying against circumcision are out here on the coasts, where once we're done breast-feeding (somewhere around kindergarten, I think) we offer our darlings only organic pre-masticated fruit and BGH-free yogurt while swaddling their tender bottoms in free-trade, undyed organic cotton lovingly hand-laved in spring water.

I seriously doubt that even the most compelling research coming out of the South African townships will sway the Whole Foods set back toward what the anti-circ crowd calls “the unkindest cut,” but I don't see why it should, either. We may have been wrong—circumcision may (almost certainly will, in fact) prove to have major health benefits, but little Max (all Bobo baby boys are named Max, aren't they?) will not be growing up in an environment where unprotected intercourse with HIV-positive women is the norm. What is world-changing in sub-Saharan Africa may be close to useless in the industrial West. Let's wait and see what develops, and not do anything rash in the meantime.

Also new this week is a study of self-described bisexual men (“Do they really exist?”) that makes me want to stick my fingers in my ears and sing lalalalala 'til it goes away, but I don't get to do that either. 101 young men who self-identified as (approximately) one-third gay, one-third straight, and one-third bisexual were hooked up to monitors and shown porn to determine whether the images that produced a physical response were consistent with their professed sexual preferences. Er, no.

“Gay men showed arousal to images of men and little arousal to images of women, and heterosexual men showed arousal to women but not to men. But the men in the study who described themselves as bisexual did not have patterns of arousal that were consistent with their stated attraction to men and to women. Instead, about three-quarters of the group had arousal patterns identical to those of gay men; the rest were indistinguishable from heterosexuals.”

Nobody panic. We'll get back to this one.

Love, Andrea ☺

Andrea Nemerson writes and teaches in San Francisco. You can e-mail her a question at andrea@altsexcolumn.com.

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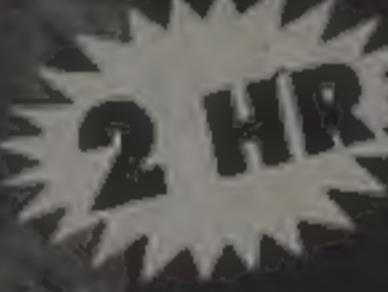
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JACK JOHNSON, DONAVON FRANKENREITER, G. LOVE CKY • THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS



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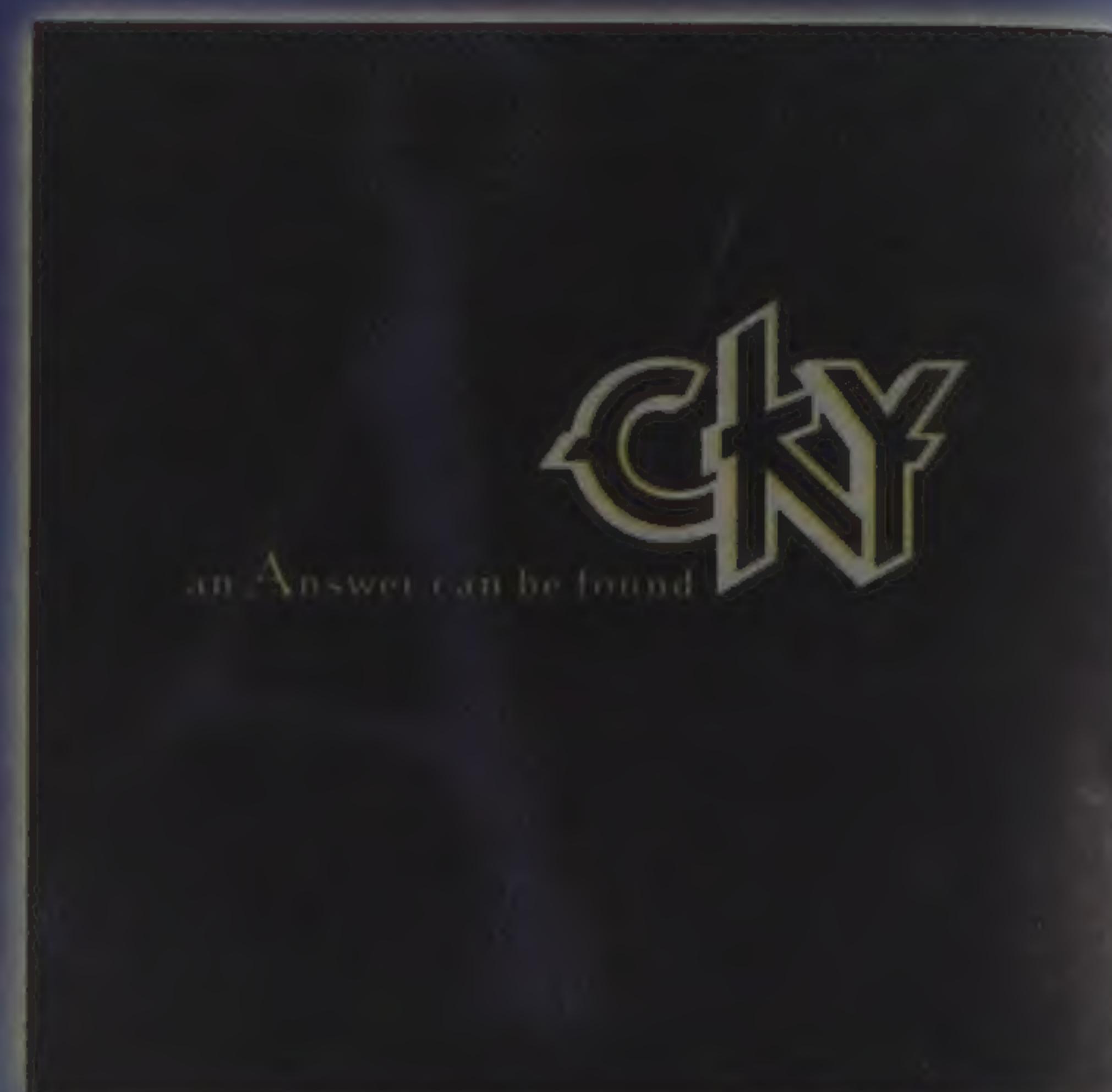
The All-American Rejects return with the follow up to their self titled debut CD which featured the smash hit single "Swing, Swing".

Through consistent touring the band has built a devout fan base and their latest release "Move Along" is poised to vault the band's finely crafted mix of rock/pop/mayhem to the next level. Features the first single "Dirty Little Secret".



SOME LIVE SONGS EP

A 6-track CD EP featuring live tracks by Brushfire Records artists Jack Johnson, G. Love and Donavon Frankenreiter. Includes a bonus hidden track by G. Love.



AN ANSWER CAN BE FOUND

Formed in the late 90's, CKY provided slash-and-burn music for Bam Margera's skateboarding videos as well as for the group's own films and other skate soundtracks. The band, who writes, produces and mixes their albums themselves have returned with their latest effort "An Answer Can Be Found" featuring the first single "Familiar Realm".

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